THE RISE OF AMERICAN RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM

AT THE ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, 1872-1928

By

LeROY MOORE, JR.

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We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this dissertation and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Edwin S. Gaustad
Visiting Examiner

Faculty Reader

Faculty Reader

Supervisory Committee

John A. Hardon
Chairman

Robert Fogel

Herbert W. Schneider

Douglass G. Adair

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This is an interpretive description of theological transition in America during the period from the end of the Civil War to the Great Depression of 1929 and following. More specifically, the present work is a case study in the rise of American religious liberalism at the Rochester Theological Seminary during this period. However, neither in intent nor in scope is this a history of the Rochester Seminary; it is rather a study in ideas. In the process some attention is paid to curricular and other procedural changes at the school, but for illustrative purposes only. Principal concern is focused upon the writings of certain members of the faculty selected because they illustrate the theological thought of the time. So far as possible, all of the available published writings of these men, as well as all publications of the school within the period under study, were examined. In addition, unpublished materials, such as school records, correspondence, and private papers were utilized, as were interviews with persons connected with the school.

In scope this is an examination of shifts in theological opinion at the Rochester Seminary from 1872 to 1928. The former date marks the accession to the presidency of the school of Augustus Hopkins Strong, while the latter is the year in which the Rochester institution merged with the Colgate Theological Seminary to form the Colgate Rochester Divinity School.

The use of these dates as boundaries for the study is somewhat artificial, for ideas can hardly be said to have boundaries. Furthermore, no attempt is made to deal with all of the ideas developed and articulated within this specific period by the men being studied, and the author has not hesitated to draw upon some works published by these men after 1928. Nevertheless, most of what is presented occurred between 1872 and 1928. Perhaps the most significant dates in the study are the years 1912 and 1915, the former marking President Strong's retirement and the latter the beginning of the presidency of Clarence A. Barbour. Between 1912 and 1915, during the administration of acting president J. W. A. Stewart, the transition to religious liberalism which was already well under way during Strong's term of office was, in effect, completed.

The first chapter of this study shows the early development at Rochester of patterns of academic integrity and freedom, as well as how the school was at its origin legally independent of but economically dependent upon its constituent churches. Chapters two, three, and four deal with the administration of President Strong, who is himself the key figure in the study. Here are discussed the three successive faculties with which Strong worked--the original group, the "Big Five," and the liberal generation--and the three phases of Strong's theology, phases not unrelated to the three faculties. Chapter five deals with the administration of Stewart, when simultaneously economic independence was enjoyed and religious liberalism came to prevail. The final chapter has to do with Barbour's presidency and shows how the freedom at Rochester for the expression of new ideas was both fully used by the liberals and thoroughly tested by the fundamentalists. What happened at the Rochester Seminary during the period under study was typical of American religious liberalism generally at the time.

PREFACE

This is a study of theological transition in America during the period from the end of the Civil War to the Great Depression of 1929 and following. During this time Protestantism in America experienced unprecedented challenge without and unparalleled change within. This was the period when religious liberalism emerged and attained its full flower. The present project is a case study in the rise of American religious liberalism.

As a case study, it is localized in space--the Rochester Theological Seminary--as well as focused upon particular persons--key professors at the school. But it is also a study of theological shifts in America, for at least one purpose is to enlighten the larger setting by illuminating a segment. This study is not in intent or scope a history of the Rochester Theological Seminary. It may be regarded by some as a first step toward a history, by others as a step beyond a history, built upon that history, so to speak. Be that as it may, this is primarily a study in ideas. The external history of the school--in the sense of answering questions about who, when, and where--simply provides the framework in which the ideas are set and apart from which they cannot be adequately understood.

So this is not an institutional history as such, but is rather an examination of some of the ideas that were in time expressed in the halls of the school. In the process of the study some attention is paid to

curricular and other procedural changes, but, for the present concern, such changes are noted only for illustrative purposes. Major consideration is focused upon the faculty of the school, but this is not a study of the faculty; some names are not even mentioned. Those chosen for treatment are deemed most significant to my purpose and no slight is intended in the omission from primary consideration of some who are in other ways important.

Let it be set down that this study is primarily an exercise in interpretive description. The emphasis is on the descriptive--i.e., my overriding concern is to ask and answer the question, "What happened?" But no definite answer can be given to that question without also asking, "Why?" and "How?" To deal with those concerns, however, is to interpret, and from this I will not shrink.

In scope this is a study of shifts at the Rochester Theological Seminary from 1872 until 1928. The former date marks the accession to the presidency of the school of A. H. Strong, while the latter is when the Rochester institution merged with Colgate Theological Seminary to form Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Though these dates mark specific limits which are, in their way, quite significant for what I am trying to show, their use as boundaries for the study is somewhat artificial, for ideas can hardly be said to have boundaries, and this is principally a study in ideas. Of the two dates, 1872 has the better claim as a legitimate boundary, for it was in that year that A. H. Strong became president of the school. But, again, even though that be true, the "Rochester orthodoxy" of Strong and his colleagues can hardly be said to date from 1872.

It really makes very little difference precisely when the Rochester theology became self-conscious of itself as orthodox; all that I want to suggest is that by the closing years of the nineteenth century that system of Christian theology especially identified with the name of A. H. Strong was regarded as orthodox. The year 1872 is also at best only an artificial starting-place simply because it is not my purpose to delineate the whole pattern of changing contours in Strong's thought. With the passage of the years his intellectual powers broadened and deepened, and in the process his understanding of the Christian faith altered, but I am not here principally interested in those alterations. If the date 1872 is artificial as a boundary, the date 1928 is more so. In that year the Rochester Theological Seminary ceased to exist as such and merged in Colgate Rochester Divinity School. But several of the professors with whom we are here particularly concerned continued to teach in the new institution, and I have not hesitated to draw upon some works published by them after 1928.

The dates 1872 and 1928 are, nevertheless, useful boundaries, and most of what is here presented occurred within that period. As far as dates are concerned, perhaps the most important are 1912 and 1915, the former marking Strong's retirement and the latter C. A. Barbour's accession to the presidency. As will be seen, the three years between 1912 and 1915 were crucial for the later complexion of the school. And, in regard to the composition of the faculty, almost everything of significance for the theological transition took place in the two decades from 1895 to 1915. Indeed, we shall see that the theological transition was, in effect, complete by 1915. Also, we shall see that the story of the theological transition at Rochester is very much the story of A. H. Strong--of what he thought, said, and did. He is the central figure for this study.

The introduction includes definitions of significant terminology and a summary view of the principal challenge confronting American Protestantism at the time. The six main chapters provide a look at the complexion of change at Rochester. Following a brief notice of the founding and early history of the school (chapter one), attention is devoted to the long presidency of A. H. Strong (chapters two, three, and four), J. W. A. Stewart's administration of 1912-1915 (chapter five), and the administration of C. A. Barbour (chapter six). These chapters deal with such matters as changes in faculty personnel, in curriculum, in financial support of the school, and in the relationship of the school to the churches, as well as with the general pattern of thought of the men introduced. The conclusion in a general way relates the various themes studied and seeks to say at least in part what it all means.

The topic for this study was originally suggested in Professor Robert L. Ferm's seminar on American religious liberalism. The principal research was conducted in the libraries of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School and the American Baptist Historical Society. A grant for the study was provided by the divinity school, for which grateful acknowledgement is hereby made. A host of persons have assisted in a multitude of ways. Invaluable suggestions were early offered by Professor Sidney E. Mead. Detailed assistance was given at every stage of research and writing by Professor Winthrop S. Hudson of Colgate Rochester. Special thanks are due to Mr. Edward C. Starr, curator of the American Baptist Historical Society and librarian par excellence. In the final stages of writing, my colleague, Professor James W. McClendon of the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, helped immeasurably by means of both pointed criticism and timely encouragement. And my typist, Sondra Orrell, in a variety of

ways on many days went well beyond the call of duty. Now, finally, my family--Logene, Jerri, and Terri--may heave a collective sigh of relief. They have been more patient and have paid more dearly than they know.

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Abbreviations
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RTS — Rochester Theological Seminary

CRDS — Colgate Rochester Divinity School

INTRODUCTION

> Christianity entered the nineteenth century with its values belonging to the early modern period, to the age of commerce and individualism, and its beliefs thoroughly medieval and pre-scientific. A religion less adapted to scientific industrialism it would be hard to imagine.[1]

The nineteenth century was predominantly a century of change. Particularly was this so of the final half of the century in America. But "change is constant and conflict continuous," so that it is "the rate rather than the fact of change" that "endows the forty years after 1860 with epochal attributes."[2] Historian Henry Adams, who lived through the period, set it down that

> in essentials like religion, ethics, philosophy; in history, literature, art; in the concepts of all science, except perhaps mathematics, the American boy of 1854 stood nearer to the year 1 than to the year 1900.[3]

It was during this period of extraordinary change--when the impact of modern science, both as a problem and as a method, came home upon and within Christianity--that religious liberalism emerged. Its appearance represents the fruition and climax of one of the most far-reaching and wide-ranging intellectual revolutions in the whole of Christian history. There

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[1]John Herman Randall and John Herman Randall, Jr., Religion and the Modern World (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1929), p. 28.

[2]Bert James Loewenberg, "Darwinism Comes to America, 1859-1900," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVIII (December, 1941), 341.

[3]The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1918), p. 53.

was a perceptible shift in theological outlook, a shift often marked simultaneously by unwelcome frustration and welcome liberation. In time this shift cannot be precisely fixed, though in America it came about gradually in the decades following the Civil War, when American churchmen faced a threefold challenge: (1) the scientific method, particularly as employed in biblical criticism but also as applied to the history of Christianity and the study of world religions; (2) the new evolutionary concept, especially following upom the work of Darwin; and (3) the demands of modern urban industrial society.[1] These three are certainly not the only factors in the challenge of the scientific revolution, nor was any one of the three wholly new during the period under study. It just happened that these three coincided and coalesced in such a way at this time that they could not be avoided, singly or collectively.

The threefold challenge was basic, touching as it did central theological concerns. The application of the historical method, particularly in biblical criticism, called for a reassessment of the conception of revelation. The doctrines of creation and providence were up for review in the face of evolutionary ideas. And the social problems made apparent in the industrial revolution required another look at Christian ethics, evangelism, and the hope of the Kingdom of God. And central to all of these concerns--revelation, creation, providence, ethics, evangelism, eschatology--central to all of these was the question of authority.

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[1] My remarks are simply an enlargement upon the well known thesis of the elder Schlesinger that American Protestantism at this time met two great challenges, "the one to its system of thought, the other to its social program." Cf. A. M. Schlesinger, "A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875-1900," Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings, LXIV (June, 1932), 524.

The scientific method has been stated many different ways with varying emphases on sundry nuances of thought,[1] but most simply it is a method of scholarship which is inductive rather than deductive--that is, the movement of thought is from the particular to the general rather than vice versa. Conclusions are reached only slowly and cautiously by a gradual process of building upon observed and verifiable facts, with tentative generalizations being deliberately tested against the accumulated evidence at every stage along the way. To be verifiable a given phenomenon must be observable, which means it must be available to public instruments of human observation and measurement, that is, the faculties of sense and laboratory experimentation. Hence, it is by reference to experimental experience that data are verified. The scientific method aims to be (1) objective, i.e., to view all data impartially; (2) inclusive, i.e., to regard all phenomena as legitimately within its purview, to exempt nothing as too sacred to be examined thoroughly; and (3) genetic, i.e., to find the root, to determine the cause, to press back to the origin of the phenomenon under study. The presuppositions on which this method is based are the validity of the normal processes of human intelligence, the unvarying constancy of the laws of nature, and the rationality of the universe and its workings as a whole.

This, then, is the method which came to prevail in the scholarly world of the West in the nineteenth century. Applied directly to the Christian scriptures, it produced biblical criticism, which in our period

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[1] Three definitions influential in American Protestantism (in turn, by a biblical scholar, a church historian, and a theologian) are: A. Kuenen, "Critical Method," The Modern Review, I (1880), 461-88, 685-713; D. C. Macintosh, "Theology in a Scientific Age," in Education for Christian Service (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), pp. 135-62; and S. J. Case, "The Historical Study of Religion," Journal of Religion, I (January, 1921), 5-14.

was usually divided into the "lower" and the "higher" criticism, a distinction more often avoided today. The lower or textual criticism was the scientific determination of the most authentic text, while the higher criticism was "the discovery and verification of the facts regarding the origin, form, and value" of the text upon the basis of its "internal characteristics and contents."[1] Hence, the latter is variously spoken of as the literary or historical study of the Bible. The lower criticism was generally accepted without a quibble, but it was quite otherwise with the higher criticism, for its devotees insisted on questioning traditional views of the background, composition, and continuing significance of various parts of the Bible. Hence, it was controversial whenever and wherever it appeared.

In America, unlike Europe, the higher criticism followed rather than preceded the direct challenge of the natural sciences to the Bible. The popularization of evolutionary theory entailed the acceptance of the scientific method, thereby preparing for the reception of the higher criticism of the Bible. Had the higher criticism preceded evolution, almost certainly there would have been in the American churches much less strife over the latter. Nevertheless, by the final decade of the nineteenth century the new approach to the Bible had become "a liberalizing force in American theology,"[2] bringing into full consciousness "a distinctly new phase of religious thinking in America."[3] And through the first quarter

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[1] Andrew C. Zenos, The Elements of the Higher Criticism (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1895), p. 9.

[2] George Hammar, Christian Realism in Contemporary American Theology (Uppsala, Sweden: 1940), p. 141.

[3] Gerald Birney Smith, "Theological Thinking in America," in Religious Thought in the Last Quarter Century, ed. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 95.

of the twentieth century in America the scientific method came more and more to dominate not only biblical studies but every other theological discipline and aspect of the religious life as well.

What this triumph of the scientific method meant with respect to religious authority is that in this quarter century, as Gerald Birney Smith reports, "all except fundamentalist theologians . . . very generally turned to Christian experience as the immediate source of theological conviction."[1] Experience was the thing. That this should happen in America is not startling. What is surprising is that the method in its most precise form did not prevail sooner, for the experiential approach had long been dominant in American religious life, in form ranging from the institutionalization of the conversion experience in revivalism to the early Unitarian defense of miracles as empirical demonstrations of supernatural grace. In our period the experiential approach climaxed in the triumph of the scientific method.

The second aspect of the threefold scientific challenge is the concept of evolution. Charles Darwin's epoch-making The Origin of the Species was published in 1859. Darwinism, like other evolutionary schemes, entails a notion of the universe as dynamic and fluid rather than inert and static, as becoming rather than being, as in process rather than in situ. The really controversial aspect of Darwin's thought was his theory of "natural selection," according to which species emerge and change gradually through the effectual concatenation of multitudes of minute accidents. His theory represented "the triumph of chance and change,"[2] and was, therefore, "the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 106-107.

[2] Cf. J. L. Greene, The Death of Adam (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1959), chap. 9.

antithesis of permanence."[1] Hence, Darwinism was diametrically opposed to the then generally accepted mechanistic doctrine of design. It was Herbert Spencer, however, much more than Darwin who made evolutionists out of Americans. Spencer's view was more optimistic. The phrase "the survival of the fittest" was for him no mere tautology, but a magic formula fusing the ideas of evolution and progress. The evolutionary stream flows uphill! "Thus the sting is drawn from Darwin's conception of the evolutionary process as an effect of blind chance,"[2] so that by means of the doctrine of inevitable and universal progress men saw meaning in science and direction in history. Evolution, because progressive, was purposive; and evolutionary science, in itself morally neutral, was transformed into a force for good.

For Christian theists this provided the framework for a new natural theology, in which the distant God of design was displaced by the present God of the process. The ofttimes optimistic evolutionary theism that came to prevail in America in our period had two main features: the shift from transcendent to immanent diety, which was closely linked to the passing of the older doctrine of design, and the thoroughgoing equation of evolution with progress. There was, in this evolutionary theism, the coalescing of what Stow Persons calls "two seemingly paradoxical trends," that is, "the intuitive type of religious thought" and "a historical and empirical approach to religion."[3] What happened is that the notion of divine immanence, when linked to evolution, contributed to a preoccupation with the process and preoccupation with the process meant engrossment with historical experience.

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[1] Loewenberg, "Darwinism Comes to America," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVIII (December, 1941), 368.

[2] Gail Kennedy, ed., Evolution and Religion (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1957), p. vii.

[3] S. Persons, ed., Evolutionary Thought in America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 433.

In some such way, then, the triumph of evolutionary theism bolstered the otherwise ruling tendency of the time to make experience authoritative. What has just been said indicates how the rise of evolutionary thought in America was not divorced from the triumph of the scientific method.

The third aspect of the challenge confronting American Protestants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the rapidly changing external environment of a society become increasingly urban and industrial. This was the period when America, which was born in the country, moved to the city. The cities in which the developing industries were located absorbed increasing numbers of displaced and unsettled masses both from at home and abroad. And the growth of the cities was accompanied by the rise of the big rich, the industrial moguls. The new situation bred and fostered economic inequality. Many were slow to see the conflict between equality and liberty, or they justified inequality by appeal to a higher authority. Oil magnate John D. Rockefeller simply said, with obvious sincerity, "God gave me my wealth."[1] Here was a concrete example of the triumph of the economic virtues through the practice of a godly discipline. The divine laws of the universe of design extended also to the economic realm. Agnostic Andrew Carnegie could not, like Rockefeller, fall back on divine providence, so he elaborated a secular "true Gospel concerning Wealth" which was as rigidly deterministic as any Calvinist creed.[2] For Christian and infidel alike, the Spencerian modification of

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[1] Quoted from a 1915 interview reported in The Woman's Home Companion; cited in John T. Flynn, God's Gold, The Story of Rockefeller and His Times (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1932), p. 395; cf. p. 306.

[2] Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth," in Democracy and the Gospel of Wealth, ed. Gail Kennedy (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1949), pp. 1-3, 7-8. The article originally appeared in the North American Review, CXLVII (June, 1889), 653-64.

the doctrine of design along lines of the survival of the fittest provided a firm buttress for the economic status quo. The moguls and the tycoons persistently suppressed demands for better working conditions, but the laboring classes could tolerate only so much of the intolerable, and the whole country was shaken by violent labor upheavals in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[1] With these earthquakes of labor strife American Protestants had a rude awakening, and their indifference fled on the wings of the morning. There was a simultaneous discovery of poverty which "brought with it a rediscovery of the brotherhood of man."[2]

There were during our period three broad patterns of Protestant response to the urban challenge.[3] First, by far the majority continued in the traditional pattern of individualistic benevolence, with some ringing the changes on the theme that the only business of the church was to save souls. This individualistic evangelicalism was the conservatism of the time, a conservatism which too easily identified Christianity with Americanism and both with laissez-faire economics and ethics.[4] Sincere Christians of this bent sought to relieve distress through charity, but charity was quite often tempered by the gospel of wealth to the extent that prosperity was regarded as a sign of godliness and poverty as the

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[1] Cf. Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York: Harper, 1949), pp. 91-111.

[2] Robert H. Bremner, From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States (New York: New York University Press, 1956), p. 268; cf. Part II.

[3] My remarks are an adaptation of Part IV of May's Protestant Churches and Industrial America.

[4] Cf. Sidney E. Mead, The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), chap. 7.

punishment for sin. Certainly not all conservative Protestants were converted to the gospel of wealth, but the chief characteristic of the majority Protestant response to the urban challenge was the defense of the economic status quo. A second pattern of Protestant response was the opposite of the first. Whereas adherents of individualistic benevolence generally sanctified the status quo, the second group, the Christian social radicals, sought a complete overthrow of the current order. This movement--or attitude--never gained a large following, and, by the end of the nineteenth century, generally faded out or merged into the more moderate social gospel in common reaction to the excesses of Marxism.

The third major Protestant response was the social gospel itself. The expression "social gospel," which did not become commonplace until about 1910,[1] refers to "the moderate progressive school of Christian social theory"[2] which arose in the post-Civil War period and gained a broad acceptance across denominational lines early in the twentieth century. The social gospel was a direct application to the social order of the traditional evangelical concern for redemption. It was not a movement of the disinherited, but a movement in behalf of the disinherited. It was a direct challange from within to many tenets of orthodox American Protestantism: To attack laissez-faire economics was to fly to the face of the canons of demonstrable American success in every realm; to preach a doctrine of human solidarity was seemingly to deny individual responsibility; and to

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[1]Cf. C. H. Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 171-83.

[2]May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America, p. 170.

expend energy principally on concerns of temporal material welfare looked like a surrender of the true "spiritual" mission of the church.

One well-nigh universal characteristic of the social gospel in America was a tendency toward facile optimism, which was probably the secret of the widespread acceptance and general effectiveness of the movement in the period of its rise. Otherwise, the movement's negative side, its social critique, could not have penetrated the major denominations.[1] The social gospel was generally liberal in its undergirding theological presuppositions, in its strong attacks on the social and economic status quo, and in its readiness to experiment. Social gospellers worked out a variety of institutional responses to the urban challenge,[2] the climax of which was the formation in 1908 of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America--"an official institutional embodiment of the social gospel."[3] Thereafter, the influence of the movement steadily broadened until by 1917 Walter Rauschenbusch could say with considerable justification: "The social gospel is no longer a prophetic and occasional note. It is a novelty only in backward social or religious communities. The social gospel has become orthodox."[4] Adherents of the movement won for the church in America the right to a prophetic ministry in matters of public concern. Ethics, like redemption, could no longer be regarded as only individualistic.

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[1]Cf. ibid., p. 234.

[2]Cf. A. I. Abell, The Urban Impact on American Protestantism, 1865-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943), chaps. 5-9.

[3]John A. Hutchison, We Are Not Divided, A Critical and Historical Study of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (New York: Round Table Press, 1941), p. 299.

[4]W. Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel (New York: Macmillan, 1917), p. 2.

Though definitely prophetic, and for that endeavor theoretically grounded, the social gospel was chiefly a pragmatic response to empirical data. Seeing was believing, and in our period American Protestants saw labor strife, poverty, abusive wealth, and all the other associated ills of the urban-industrial society. Out of this grew an over-powering consciousness of the wrongness of things and determination to do something about it. As otherwise generally in the period, no a priori approach would do, but experience was the thing--whether the observed experience of others or the practical experience of ourselves. Thus, in its way also, urbanism assisted in elevating the pragmatic and the experiential to the position of primacy.

These three, then, were the principal aspects of the challenge confronting American Protestantism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries--the scientific method, the evolutionary philosophy, and the urban situation. Liberal theology is not necessarily the product of any one or all of these three factors; there have been varieties of theological liberalism in all ages of the church. The term "theological liberalism" eludes precise definition, since it does not refer to a particular body of doctrine but is instead a descriptive term--descriptive of a characteristic attitude. Liberalism may produce many liberal theologies. A "liberal theology" is a particular body of doctrine, more or less coherent, that is characterized by the liberal attitude. Daniel Day Williams adequately summarized this attitude:

> "Liberalism" as applied to a type of theological thought needs to be understood in the same broad terms which are necessary when it is used to characterize modern social and political movements. In its theological context it designates the spirit and attitude of those who sought to incorporate in Christian theology the values of freedom of thought, tolerance, and the humanitarian motives in modern Western culture.[1]

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[1] "Liberalism," in A Handbook of Christian Theology, ed. Marvin Halverson (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), p. 207.

In America in the period between the Civil War and the Great Depression those Protestant theologians whose work was characterized by the liberal attitude articulated two main types of liberal theology, which are now usually designated as evangelical liberalism and scientific modernism. The difference between the two is one of perspective and method. Robert T. Handy says of the evangelical liberals:

> They believed in the divinity of Christ and accepted the authority of the Bible in matters religious, but they sought to express this in the idiom of the time in which they worked. They were mediators, endeavoring to defend faith by restating it in terms congenial to current concepts.

In contrast to them, the scientific modernists were "theological radicals" who "sought to ground faith by empirical method on some basis other than the Bible." They were "always a smaller group than the evangelical liberals, but attracted much attention."[1] We will find that both types of liberal theology were expressed at the Rochester Seminary.

In these introductory pages we have surveyed in a general way the challenge confronting Protestantism in America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and we have seen something of the response made. In the chapters that follow we shall study in some detail what transpired at the Rochester Theological Seminary during this period. In the process, many of the themes dominant in American Protestant thought at the time will be examined. First, however, we go back to the school's beginnings and early life to see what sort of institutional framework was first erected and what kind of climate of opinion was early achieved, for only thereby can we best understand what subsequently developed at the school.

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[1] R. T. Handy, "Fundamentalism and Modernism in Perspective," Religion in Life, XXIV (Summer, 1955), 386-87. Cf. Mead, The Lively Experiment, pp. 171-75; and Kenneth Cauthen, The Impact of American Religious Liberalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 26-30.

CHAPTER I

EARLY PATTERNS AT ROCHESTER

At the middle of the nineteenth century, so the story goes, an enterprising landlord in the bustling young city of Rochester, in the western reaches of New York State, had an old hotel which he thought would rent for more as a university. So, with a stroke of Yankee ingenuity, "he put in a few books, sent for a coach-load of professors, bought some philosophical apparatus, and, by the time the green peas were ripe, had graduated a large class of students." At least that is the way it looked to one contemporary observer, a certain Ralph Waldo Emerson.[1]

What the New England sage described was the odd circumstance of the origin of the University of Rochester and the Rochester Theological Seminary. The year was 1850; the place, Rochester, New York. The two schools were founded simultaneously--closely related though independent from the first. In the beginning they shared common quarters--the ungainly red brick structure of the old United States Hotel, on the north side of Buffalo Street (now West Main) near Elizabeth Street. Actually, the institutions of higher learning did not really edge a hotel out of its home; the box-like edifice, built as

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[1]Quoted in A. H. Strong, Historical Discourse at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Rochester Theological Seminary (Rochester: E. R. Andrews, 1900), p. 23. This is the most important treatment of the school's early history. It is reprinted in Strong, Miscellanies (Philadelphia: Griffith & Rowland, 1912), I, pp. 113-71.

a hostelry in 1826, had seen a succession of unrelated uses--manual training school, girl's school, and, since 1832, railroad station.[1]

But what about that "coach-load of professors"? From whence did they come? Well, they came from the central New York State village of Hamilton, some one hundred twenty-five miles east-southeast of Rochester. Back in 1820 the Baptists of New York State founded there the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution. Originally the course of study was limited to men intent on the ministry of the gospel, but in 1839 the doors were opened to those seeking a "secular" education. In 1846 the literary and theological branches separated: Madison University was incorporated and the Hamilton Theological Seminary began a separate existence. By about this time, however, the Baptists themselves "had unconsciously come to the beginning of a new order of things." So said historian Henry Vedder, and he continued:

> Up to this time . . . Baptists had been the sect everywhere spoken against--the Ishmael among denominations, every man's hand against it, and to a certain extent its hand against every man. Before this, Baptists had everywhere been few in numbers, composed chiefly of what are contemptuously called 'the common people,' often persecuted, always despised, frequently unlearned. Now they had become the largest Protestant body but one in the United States; they surpassed most other bodies in the scope and effectiveness of their missionary operations; they were rapidly increasing in wealth, intelligence, and social consequence. In a word, it was actually becoming respectable to be a Baptist.[2]

The newly "respectable" Baptists could not escape the tensions of respectability, and in New York State at the middle of the nineteenth century those tensions centered on Hamilton--on the fledgling university and the struggling seminary. There were some Baptists who were ready to leave the country and go to town with their educational endeavors. Their choice was Rochester, where the railroad and the Erie Canal together met the shores of

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[1]Cf. R. H. Arnot, "Rochester: Backgrounds of Its History," Rochester Historical Society, I (1922), 108.

[2]Vedder, "Fifty Years of Baptist History," Bibliotheca Sacra, LVII (October, 1900), 664-65.

the Great Lakes. Rochester was in the midst of its boom, riding the crest of prosperity, a prosperity which beckoned "respectable" Baptists, who desperately needed more financial support and were discouraged by the general disrepair of the facilities at Hamilton. They were joined by those with missionary vision who were assured of the long-range evangelical effect of placing the schools in a major population center on the crossroads of the nation. In Hamilton, however, there was a fiercely proud local sentiment, as well as an agrarian mentality naturally suspicious of things urban. So the lines were drawn and so the battle was pitched until every Baptist church in the state was affected by the resultant bitter partisanship.

In the end neither side got precisely what it wanted, though those who favored the city ultimately gained the most. Neither of the Hamilton institutions was removed to Rochester. Instead, two new institutions were founded, but at great expense to the older schools, for both the new schools drew their faculties, as well as their original student bodies, from Hamilton. Thus, the Baptists of New York State found themselves the sponsors of four institutions of higher learning in place of two—those in Hamilton, which later were renamed Colgate Theological Seminary and Colgate University, and the two new ones, the Rochester Theological Seminary and the University of Rochester. The seminary at Hamilton was owned and controlled by the New York Baptist Education Society, while its Rochester counterpart was responsible to the newly-formed New York Baptist Union for Ministerial Education. So the Baptist forces in the state were divided, going their separate ways, and it was long before the breach was completely healed.[1] Hence, there was something

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[1] For details see Strong, Historical Discourse, 7-24; Annual Report of the Union, 1850, pp. 8-12, 28-40; and, from the standpoint of the university, Jesse L. Rosenberger, Rochester and Colgate: Historical Background of the Two Universities (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), chapter 3, passim; and Rosenberger, Rochester: The Making of a University (Rochester: University of Rochester, 1927), chap. 1, passim.

of wrath in the beginnings at Rochester, but there is no definite evidence of underlying theological differences, though one of the foremost leaders in the Rochester endeavor was a New York City pastor, William R. Williams (1804-1885), known for the adoption of new ideas.[1]

So it was that a "coach-load of professors" came to Rochester from Hamilton--but also a coach-load of students, whom Emerson forgot to mention. A pattern of theological seriousness and academic excellence was established by the new seminary's two original professors, both transplants from Hamilton--John Sharp Maginnis (1805-1852), "vigorous Calvinist" and "a Princeton theologian of the straitest sect,"[2] and Thomas Jefferson Conant (1802-1891), able philologist.[3]

The faculty in the days of the school's youth apparently fit no single theological mold; there was some diversity from the start. There was the biblical literalism of Velona R. Hotchkiss (1815-1882),[4] who, according to President Strong, "believed in the universality of the deluge and in the creation of the world in six literal days of twenty-four hours each," but nevertheless succeeded in communicating "his own enthusiasm for Bible study

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[1]Cf. Frederick T. Persons, "William R. Williams," in Dictionary of American Biography, XX, pp. 295-96.

[2]Strong, Miscellanies, II, p. 59. Maginnis was sometime pastor; then professor of biblical and pastoral theology at Hamilton, 1838-50, and at RTS, 1850-52.

[3]Professor of languages, Colby College, Waterville, Maine, 1827-33; professor of languages and biblical literature, Hamilton, 1835-50; professor of Hebrew and biblical interpretation, RTS, 1850-57; engaged in linguistic work, notably the revision of the English Bible under the auspices of the American Bible Union, 1857-91; translator of Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar (1839); author of numerous Bible commentaries, etc.

[4]Professor of church history, 1852-57, and of biblical literature and exegesis, 1857-65, at RTS.

to each of his pupils."[1] There was George W. Northrup (1826-1900),[2] later of the University of Chicago, who genuinely agonized after the truth, facing all questions with absolute candor; from him said Strong, "we learned a method of investigation that was better than ready-made doctrine."[3] There was the detailed exegetical precision of New Testament scholar Horatio B. Hackett (1808-1875),[4] who was "sometimes criticized . . . for avoiding doctrinal conclusions," but whose students "learned what absolute thoroughness of investigation was."[5] And then there was the expansive approach of R. J. W. Buckland (1829-1877),[6] "who brought into the seminary a certain air of science and society," who "believed in a kingdom of God in nature as well as in the soul," and who was attracted by "the revelations of the telescope and of the microscope."[7]

But in those early years there was on the faculty no one the equal of Ezekiel Gilman Robinson (1815-1894),[8] the seminary's first president and professor of theology for two decades during the formative period of the

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[1]Strong, Historical Discourse, p. 28.

[2]Professor of church history, RTS, 1857-67; professor of systematic theology, University of Chicago Divinity School, 1867-1900.

[3]Strong, Historical Discourse, p. 29.

[4]Sometime professor at Brown University and Newton Theological Institution, 1835-68; professor of biblical literature and New Testament exegesis, RTS, 1870-75.

[5]Strong, Historical Discourse, p. 30.

[6]Professor of church history, 1869-76.

[7]Strong, Historical Discourse, pp. 29-30.

[8]Sometime pastor and teacher; at RTS: professor of biblical and pastoral theology, 1853-72, and president, 1868-72; at Brown University, president, 1872-89. Author of Yale Lectures on Preaching; Principles and Practice of Morality (1888); Christian Theology (1894); etc. Translator, Neander's Planting and Training of the Christian Church (1865).

school's life. His successor, A. H. Strong, insisted that "to Doctor Robinson the institution at Rochester owes more of its character and success than to any other single man."[1] "The real greatness of the seminary began" with his coming to the chair of theology.[2] And probably this is true when we recognize the pervasive influence of Robinson on his successor. Strong was ever ready to give full credit to his able teacher. He put into words the sentiment of many a grateful student when he said: "Personal influences are the strongest in education; let us be thankful if we have ever been the pupils of even one great teacher. Such a teacher was Doctor Robinson."[3] His greatness, in Strong's opinion, was largely in his approach to his task:

> When he was elected professor in 1853, he had not yet settled his views of theology; he put himself side-by-side with his students as an inquirer; together they fought their way toward fixed convictions. This gave a freshness to his teaching. Freedom of criticism had no limit. He learned from his students, as well as his students from him. . . . He was more critical than constructive; his chief merit is that he taught his pupils to think for themselves.[4]

That is the way it looked to a discerning pupil, and indeed it looked much the same to the teacher himself. In his autobiography, Robinson said:

> I never forgot, from the beginning of my Rochester work to its end, that I was myself a learner, and was ever open to the reception of truth, come whencesoever it might. This alone could explain the freedom which every student was encouraged to exercise in questioning and in discussion. We never were afraid of looking any opinion frankly in the face, and reverently and devoutly inquiring, under the teaching of God's Word, whether it was truth or error. It has always seemed to me that no greater wrong could be done to theological students than to require them to accept without scrutiny any principle or sentiment avowed by their teacher. They should, on the contrary, be encouraged, with an humble reliance on the Divine guidance, to inquire, think, and decide for themselves.[5]

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[1] Strong, Miscellanies, II, p. 62.

[2] Strong, Historical Discourse, p. 24.

[3] Ibid., p. 27. [4] Ibid., p. 26.

[5] Ezekiel Gilman Robinson, An Autobiography, ed. E. H. Johnson (Boston: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1896), p. 61.

In this autobiographical statement Robinson was not just padding the paragraph when he spoke of making devout inquiry "under the teaching of God's Word," for he meant just that, but not in the way that the unsuspecting might imagine. For Robinson was no biblicist. Far from it--he was an exponent of the higher criticism of the Bible considerably before its method and results were much discussed in America.[1] His was a progressive theology. He paid earnest heed to developments in the scientific world, anticipating modifications which the new discoveries would effect in theology.[2] One incisive interpreter said that "theologically he was unchained . . . and in advance of his times."[3] Advanced he was, but unchained only in a sense--he was unchained from the old literalistic biblicism, yet he remained nonetheless biblical. Having rejected biblicism, he was all the more bound to biblical affirmations. He rejected the prooftext approach and sought instead the meaning in scriptural statements, the truth underlying the statement of which the statement is an inadequate expression.

For Robinson, the scriptures were an organic whole and possessed authority as such, but not in a simplistic way in and of themselves. In a sermon published in 1867 he summarized his view on the nature of authority for the Christian:

> For traditional Churchism and for traditional Protestantism, as well as for callow Rationalism, there remains but one safe and abiding resource, and that is the Church and the Bible--the Bible

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[1]Cf. B. O. True, "As a Leader in Post-Graduate Study," in ibid., p. 247.

[2]Cf. Anderson, Memorial Address on E. G. Robinson, (Providence: Brown University, 1894), p. 11. For a careful survey of Robinson's theology, cf. Strong, Miscellanies, II, pp. 58-109.

[3]H. E. Starr, "Ezekiel Gilman Robinson," in Dictionary of American Biography, XVI, p. 43.

> as understood, and believed in, and scientifically expounded, by the universal and divinely sanctified reason of the Church of the living God.[1]

For a fuller development of this approach we turn to his Christian Theology, which contains the substance of his lectures at Rochester. He states his case quite clearly:

> The Church and the Scriptures are authorities which can never be justly or safely divided. The old question of the priority of their origin, answer it as we may, can never determine the question of their relative authority; for though the Christian Church was founded upon the recognized authority of the Old Testament Scriptures; . . . yet the Church must have originated before the writing of any portion of the New Testament, and must also have been built on the unwritten teachings of the New Testament Apostles and Prophets; and only as the Church has studied and obeyed the written teachings of both Testaments, has she proved herself to be the Church of the living God. Without the Scriptures of both Testaments, the Church has no accredited or infallible guide for herself, or authority for her teachings; and without the Church, the Scriptures have no visible, trustworthy expounder of their meaning. The Church neglecting or setting aside the authority of the Scriptures, has always plunged into fanaticism or superstition; and Scripture, read in contempt of the views of the generations of believers who have studied its meaning and reproduced it in their lives, has always been made to teach another gospel than that of Christ, and in due time has been reduced to the level of any other ancient and by-gone literature.[2]

And these ideas Robinson was teaching at Rochester in the third quarter of the nineteenth century! He sounds much like what we have learned to designate the "post-liberal" approach.

Robinson was a man who "cared nothing for words except as they gave expression to reality."[3] Theologically he was intent on investigation of the unfamiliar rather than systematization of the familiar. To use his own word, he was not a "systemizer." He was more critical than constructive. He insisted that new ground be broken before new structures were erected--or old ones rebuilt. In intellectual endeavors he maintained a vigorous

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[1]Quoted in Anderson, Memorial Address, p. 11; cf. pp. 9-11.

[2]Robinson, Christian Theology (Rochester: E. R. Andrews, 1894), pp. 6-7.

[3]Anderson, Memorial Address, p. 9.

honesty, persistently preferring to "leave truths unarticulated in their native largeness than to dwarf them in order to meet the demands of some exacting system."[1] This same integrity found full expression also in the pulpit, where he adopted the most direct, natural, and incisive methods of address.[2] So, whether at the lectern or in the pulpit, he exercised an immeasurable influence over Baptists in America. In 1900 Strong spoke for the denomination when he remarked that "if as a people we have intellectual freedom, breadth and power today, it is largely through the professional teaching and personal example of Ezekiel G. Robinson."[3]

So much for our brief notice of President Robinson and his theological perspective. He more than anyone else set the tone of intellectual integrity at Rochester. On several fronts he was considerably in advance of many of his contemporaries. From the vantage point of a quarter-century A. H. Strong looked back and not inaptly adjudged that, during his time, Robinson "probably taught . . . a more modern system than was at that time taught in any other evangelical seminary of any denomination whatever."[4] Robinson was true to the idea of a theological seminary as defined by H. Richard Niebuhr: "intellectual center of the church's life." Niebuhr added that "to love God with the whole understanding has ever been accepted by the great Church . . . as part of its duty and privilege, and . . . there is no exercise of the intellect which is not an expression of love."[5] In affirming this in his work Ezekiel Gilman Robinson set the pattern at Rochester.

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[1] Ibid. [2] Cf. ibid., pp. 6-8.

[3] Strong Historical Discourse, p. 27.

[4] Strong, Miscellanies, II, p. 107.

[5] H. R. Niebuhr, The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry (New York: Harper, 1956), p. 107.

Those early days at Rochester were days of vision and of struggle. One concrete expression of vision was the establishment of the German Department of the seminary in 1852. Supporters of the school were cognizant of the fact that among the flood of Germanic immigrants to America's shores at mid-century were many Baptists who lacked trained ministers, as well as others who were unchurched. The solution was found in establishing a special department, separate from but alongside the regular seminary, for the purpose of training in their native language a ministry for the German immigrants. The German Department had a long and fruitful history, serving an important if necessarily restricted function in the education of the ministry. As the culmination of a gradual process the department eventually became a separate institution, the successor of which persists to this day in the form of the North American Baptist Seminary of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.[1] The first native professor in the German Department was from among the finest fruits of continental pietism, a man born to teach, the Reverend Augustus Rauschenbusch (1816-1899),[2] father of Rochester's most notable son, his own Walter.

The early days at Rochester were days of struggle, and more often than not the struggle was economic, for the seminary began with "absolutely no endowment." Furthermore, because of the divisive circumstances of its origin, the infant school had to depend for its support upon the Baptist churches of only a part of the State of New York. To this limited constituency the school looked for funds "to defray its current expenses and to support the students who in the majority of cases were then, as they have ever been, as

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[1]For summary treatment of the history of the German Department and its successor institutions, cf. A. J. Ramaker, "The Story of the German Department," RTS Bulletin (October, 1927), 30-46; and S. Fleming, "American Baptists and Higher Education" (unpublished typescript; Rochester: American Baptist Historical Society, 1963), I, pp. 234-39.

[2]Professor in German Department, 1858-90. Cf. Walter Rauschenbusch, Biography of Augustus Rauschenbusch (1901); Carl E. Schneider, "Americanization of Karl Augustus Rauschenbusch, 1816-1899," Church History, XXIV (March, 1955), 3-14.

rich in faith as they were poor in worldly goods."[1] Of course, the trustees of the new institution faced this problem frankly from the beginning. In the very first of their annual reports, they agreed as follows:

> With all our painful experience of the past, we think the day has gone by, when reflecting men . . . can hesitate as to the necessity of such an endowment as shall fully provide for the department of instruction. The embarrassment which attends the not unfrequent commercial revolutions of the country must always render it unsafe and often disastrous to depend upon annual collections for this class of expenses.

But these same men were not unaware of some of the possible unhealthy implications of securing a large endowment. They continued:

> We would be far from desiring, nay, we would strenuously oppose such an independence as would in any important sense sever this great enterprise from either the control, the sympathies, the prayers, or the liberalities of the churches. No! We want it embalmed in their heart of hearts, and its very foundation laid in prayer and faith.[2]

From this we see, nevertheless, that for financial purposes, the school was committed from the very first to travel two roads for its own economic well being--the road of direct commerce with the churches and the road to the permanent endowment necessary for financial security--wherever such road might lead. We have already noticed that in the beginning the school was necessarily confined to only one of these roads, that which led to the churches. One thing that we will see is how a shift was made until the time came that the school received almost its total economic sustenance from funds accumulated along the road to permanent endowment. And, furthermore, we will also see that this seemingly unacademic matter was not unrelated to what was going on in the classrooms. In a sense, it is true that from the very first the trustees committed the school to two roads that in their course

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[1]Ramaker, "Period of Early Struggles," RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 10.

[2]Annual Report of the Union, 1850, p. 14.

veered further and further apart. So the final securing of a worthy and sufficient endowment was to mean the school no longer was required to tread the road of the churches. The road to financial security was also the road to economic independence.

Actually, the legal machinery for independence from the churches was in existence at the school's beginning, for, far from being an official ecclesiastical body, the sponsor, the New York Baptist Union for Ministerial Education, was in effect an independent and private corporation. Article III of the constitution of the Union states the Provisions for membership of the corporation:

> The Union shall consist of members of Baptist churches, paying at least two dollars yearly; and of members of Baptist churches and congregations made life members of the Union by the payment of twenty dollars at one time; and of delegates sent by Baptist churches regularly contributing to the Union, no church sending more than one such delegate.[1]

So the corporation consisted of Baptists--not Baptist churches but Baptist individuals. There were, indeed, delegates from contributing churches, but said delegates possessed no authority or rights not also enjoyed by any ordinary two-dollar contributor or more affluent twenty-dollar donor. This was about as close as the Union came to being an ecclesiastical body, though there was the further provision of Article VIII:

> In case of local or important questions, including the election of Trustees, the decision shall be had by votes of churches, and in such case, one annual or life member, or delegate, shall speak for the churches respectively, the members and delegate of the church choosing such single member or delegate to speak for them. Any three members of the Union may ask that a question be treated as thus local or important in character, and the preliminary vote whether such be its character, shall also be decided by votes of churches.

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[1] The constitution is printed in each Annual Report of the Union. The full text of the constitution, with notations on principal changes between 1850 and 1928, is given in Appendix I.

The purpose of this particular article in the Union's constitution was not so much to tie the Union to the churches as to insure that no crucial decision could be made apart from genuine geographical representation of Baptist opinion in New York State. On such matters one and only one person from each congregation could vote, all other members of the Union having their voting privilege suspended. In intent, this was to correct an abuse of membership and voting privilege actually experienced at Hamilton during the controversy over possible removal to Rochester. Earnest Hamiltonians, desirous of protecting their own local interests, had managed, through the expedient of the minimum contribution and the vote thereby secured, to impose their will on Baptists from across the state. Article VIII would prevent any localized group from dominating the affairs of the new seminary.

The actual business of the corporation was entrusted to a twenty-four member board of trustees elected by the Union in groups of eight per year for three year terms. According to Article IV, "this Board shall forever be composed of members of Baptist churches in good standing." The raison d'etre for the Union was to "sustain a Theological School, with a suitable number of Professors." Said professors were "to be chosen by the Board of Trustees, and removed at their pleasure; but no Professor shall be appointed or removed except by a vote of a majority of the whole Board" (Article VI). Such are the principal provisions of the original constitution of the New York Baptist Union for Ministerial Education. From its adoption in 1850 to the 1928 merger with Colgate this constitution remained essentially unchanged. Hence, as noted above, there existed from the very beginning the legal machinery for the school's independence from the churches--and this because the school's sponsoring society was not an ecclesiastical body as such but a private corporation, the sole purpose of which was to secure and insure the school's support.

In the school's first two decades, the pendulum of opinion regarding economic security swung from pessimism to optimism. The pessimism was expressed by E. G. Robinson in his autobiography when he discussed the financially uncertain years of 1857-1859. During that period, he wrote, it "became evident . . . that the Seminary was absolutely bankrupt. . . . The future of the Seminary was problematical. It was a relief, however, to know our real condition, and what alone could save us."[1] Thereafter, Robinson devoted much of his own energy to securing funds for endowment, and by 1866 was meeting what he regarded as "encouraging success."[2] The tide turned and larger gifts began to come in, but really significant contributions were rare enough that on January 4, 1869, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees actually voted to rename the seminary in honor of a Mr. Roswell S. Burrows, whose donations totalled $100,000. The name was not changed, however, probably because Mr. Burrows withdrew offers of further endowment shortly thereafter.[3] But the pinnacle of optimism for the early period was reached in 1870, when the Board of Trustees reported as follows:

> It is believed that $250,000, with the amount now on hand [just over $100,000], will put the institution on such a basis that . . . no other public appeal for endowments need ever be made, but that private donations and legacies will meet all demands for future enlargements. Shall not this one <u>last</u> appeal be met liberally and promptly?[4]

That sort of economic optimism now seems dreadfully myopic. Certainly Robinson's earlier pessimism was more realistic. By the time Robinson left office, the seminary's endowment had increased from nothing to $113,750, providing almost one-fourth of the total receipts in 1871-72.

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[1] <u>Ezekiel Gilman Robinson</u>, p. 63. [2] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 75.

[3] Cf. Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, February 3, 1868; January 4, 1869; and March 1, 1869.

[4] <u>Annual Report of the Union, 1870</u>, p. 16.

The original course of study at Rochester was limited to two years; in 1861 a third year was added. The curriculum was initially divided into three areas--biblical literature, ecclesiastical history, and theology. By 1872, when Robinson resigned, it was grouped under the five departments of Biblical Literature, Ecclesiastical History, Apologetics, Theology, and Homiletics and Pastoral Theology. The plan of work was a fixed entity; no elective courses were introduced until very late in Strong's administration.[1] In this respect Rochester was typical of American theological schools in the second half of the nineteenth century. The early part of the century had seen the gradual shift from individualized tutorship in the homes of leading ministers to group instruction in theological seminaries. By mid-nineteenth century, the latter, though hardly standardized, had developed into a patterned emphasis on the traditional theological disciplines.

We have looked briefly at the first two decades plus two years of the life of the Rochester Theological Seminary. The character of the school was very largely determined by what transpired in those early days. The school was not long hampered by the strife in which it was born. E. G. Robinson early attained and maintained a pattern of academic excellence and honest inquiry within the framework of biblical authority; he was ahead of his time. Others on the faculty were less flexible than he, though their work was of the selfsame unashamed quality. Financial worries were abundant in those years, but they were always frankly faced and, in time, overcome, so that by 1872 the school was at least on its way to financial security. And this paved the way, as we shall see, for a grand measure of theological

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[1] For a discussion of the curriculum, see C. H. Moehlman, "The Story of the Curriculum of the Rochester Theological Seminary," RTS Bulletin (November, 1926), 265-84.

independence. So, on every front in every way, the first two decades of the seminary's history were in reality the formative period. Patterns were established and the future was anticipated to a remarkable degree. It remained for A. H. Strong and others to fill out the already present patterns and to fulfill the future.

CHAPTER II

A. H. STRONG AND HIS COLLEAGUES: THE BIG FIVE

I

"The Seminary! I am the Seminary!" Probably Augustus Hopkins Strong (1836-1921)[1] never made that precise statement, though, according to a younger colleague, such a remark could very well have fallen from his lips, "and all who knew would have approved."[2] They would have approved--or agreed--because they were blind neither to the man nor to the magnitude of his contribution to the school. For forty full and fruitful years, from 1872 to 1912, he presided over the affairs of the seminary. Those four decades were the years when the challenge of the scientific revolution came home to American Protestants. In very few similar periods is so much variation and modification and alteration compacted. Yet, through all the vicissitudes of that vacillating age, there was at the helm of the Rochester Theological Seminary one supremely dominant and seemingly indomitable figure, Augustus Hopkins Strong.

Strong himself customarily extolled his teacher and predecessor, Ezekiel Gilman Robinson, singling him out as the one man to whom the school

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[1]Born at Rochester, August 3, 1836. B.A., Yale University, 1857; graduated, RTS, 1859; in Europe, 1859-60. Pastor at Haverhill, Massachusetts, 1861-65, and at Cleveland, Ohio, 1865-72. At RTS: president and professor of biblical theology, 1872-1912; president emeritus, 1912-21. Died at Pasadena, California, November 29, 1921.

[2]J. W. A. Stewart, RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), p. 45.

was most indebted for its character and success.[1] But such commendation of Robinson cannot detract from a necessarily generous estimate of Strong's own contribution to the life of the school. For, over the whole course of the school's history, none surpassed him, none equalled him, in determining just what sort of institution the Rochester Theological Seminary would be. By background and temperament he was eminently prepared for the task to which he set his hand.

Already before 1872, when he became president and professor of theology, Strong knew the seminary. He was a Rochesterian by birth. At the family home there, when he was but six, his mother led him into "a large and dimly lighted closet" and taught him to pray; and there in Rochester, in the bitter cold of a winter storm, he marched with his father through the snow drifts and learned the importance of faithful attendance at the meetings of the church. There as a lad he actually heard the famous "Rochester Rappings" of those notorious spiritualists, the Fox sisters, who resided in a house owned by his father. There, too, at the age of fourteen years, his intellectual awakening occurred; by the time he was sixteen he had mastered Latin and Greek, had read many of the classics, even translating some for himself. There the larger literary world opened before his wondering gaze, and, as a boy-member of a men's debating society, he learned to think on his feet and to speak what he thought. There he witnessed a hanging. And, because he was yet too young for college, there he worked for a year and a half in the counting-room of his father's newspaper, The Rochester Daily Democrat, where he followed closely the news of the day, discussed important questions with important people--"my father probably having the largest

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[1]Cf. Miscellanies, II, p. 62; Historical Discourse, p. 24.

acquaintance with men of any single man in Rochester"[1]--and acquired skills of business management which served him well in later dealings with the trustees of the seminary.

Thence, from Rochester, he departed for Yale, where he imbibed philosophical idealism from Noah Porter (1811-1892).[2] But he returned. And one of his return trips was in 1856 during the spring vacation of his junior year. Evangelist Charles G. Finney was conducting his third Rochester revival. Young Strong's father had been converted at the first of those meetings--in 1830--and now the time had come for this proud youth himself. He returned to Yale a changed man, not "strangely warmed"--that came later--but decided and committed, a new course set before him. Even at this early stage he was already intent on entering the Christian ministry. Like Jonathan Edwards and Horace Bushnell, Strong seems to have had three distinct conversions--an earlier "intellectual awakening," this "purely Arminian experience," and a subsequent climactic and all-pervading mystical "union of the believer with Christ."[3] But, probably chiefly because of his revivalist heritage, he chose to apply the word "conversion" only to the second of these, which he admitted was considerably overshadowed by the third. Whatever one decides about that, Strong was very conscious of being a product of the revival. Late in life he maintained that

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[1]Strong, One Hundred Chapel Talks to Theological Students, Together with Two Autobiographical Addresses (Philadelphia: Griffith & Rowland, 1913), pp. 7-8. For details on his life from an autobiographical perspective, cf. ibid., pp. 3-42; "Reminiscences of Early Rochester," Rochester Historical Society, IV (1925), 291-309. Cf. also John H. Strong, "Augustus Hopkins Strong," ibid., I (1922), 235-241.

[2]The substance of Noah Porter's lectures at Yale is contained in his The Human Intellect (New York: Scribner Armstrong & Co., 1868).

[3]Strong, One Hundred Chapel Talks, pp. 6, 12-18, 23-24.

> Rochester owes more to revivals of religion than it owes to its providential location or to the energy of its people; for without those revivals it is questionable whether there would have been anything like the education or the enterprise that have characterized the city.[1]

Revivals first, education second, enterprise third; that is, piety, knowledge, and work; or faith, reason, and effort: that is about the scheme of priorities Strong tried to follow. Anyway, at Rochester he was born and reborn, and to Rochester he returned.

Thus, when he took up residence there in 1872, he was simply coming back home, so he already knew the seminary. But his prior acquaintance with the school was not just that of the usual hometown boy, for his father, newspaper publisher Alvah Strong, Baptist deacon and civic leader, was one of the founders of the seminary, one of the group of interested men who lured that coachload of professors away from Hamilton. Alvah Strong was the first treasurer of the seminary's Board of Trustees, and he served on that Board continuously from 1850 to 1885. Thus, when young Augustus finished his undergraduate studies at Yale, it was only natural that he should return home to the Rochester Seminary to complete his formal preparation for the Christian ministry. It was then that he sat under E. G. Robinson. Determinative for his thought were these three, Finney, Porter, and Robinson; but in Strong's eyes the greatest of these was Robinson.[2] When his seminary studies

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[1] "Reminiscences," Rochester Historical Society, IV (1925), 307; cf. 301-02. For Strong's evaluation of Finney, see Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism (Philadelphia: Griffith & Rowland, 1899), pp. 364-87. On the Rochester revivals, cf. Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion In Western New York, 1800-1850 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1950).

[2] Cf. George W. Taft, "Two Remarkable Men and Their Books: Augustus Hopkins Strong and William Newton Clarke," The Standard (January 18, 1913), 576. For Strong on Robinson, cf. Miscellanies, II, pp. 58-109; esp. pp. 63-64. To my knowledge, Strong never published an evaluation of Porter's influence upon him. The latter is referred to or quoted forty-six times in the final edition of the Systematic Theology (3 vols.: 1907-09; 1 vol. ed.; Philadelphia: Judson, copyright 1907).

were behind him, Strong spent a year in Europe, a year he deemed not particularly profitable.[1] Returning, he was pastor for a time at Haverhill, Massachusetts, and then for seven years at the First Baptist Church of Cleveland. One of his parishioners in the Ohio city was a man three years his junior, a certain John Davison Rockefeller; thus, an important friendship was made. Also, while at Cleveland Strong renewed the old family acquaintance with the elderly Finney, then finishing out his life's work at nearby Oberlin. During these years Strong won wide admiration and respect for solid sermons on doctrinal themes. From this Cleveland ministry the promising thirty-six year old theologian turned to new duties at the Rochester Theological Seminary, a school already well known to him, but now to be known from a different perspective, that of administrator and teacher.

When he went to Rochester, Strong was already steady in purpose, in the determination with which he applied his seemingly boundless energy to the time and point of advantage, in the habits of scholarship. Perhaps the secret of his life's accomplishment was as much discipline as brilliance. He delighted in the world's great literature and himself possessed the literary gift. Profound and able scholar he was, but also a man of affairs. He took pleasure in entertaining and his home was a mecca of hospitality in Rochester--for local friends, for the intelligentsia from at home and abroad, for students--he entertained every student of the seminary at his table once a year. He was a leader in denominational endeavors (president of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1892 to 1895; president of the General Convention of Baptists of North America, 1907 to 1910), a friend of education everywhere (for thirty-four years a trustee of Vassar College, chairman of the Board from 1906 to 1911), founder of the local historical society, and

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[1]Strong, <u>One Hundred Chapel Talks</u>, pp. 21-22.

influential member of the influential Pundit Club.[1] For all these interests and many others, Strong was in much demand as a speaker. His public addresses were models of clarity and grace, generally brief and always to the point, timely, witty, subtle, and supremely entertaining. He did not waste words, but joined them together into appropriate metaphors which flowed into the symphonic pattern of the whole of his desired effect.[2]

The principal source of intellectual nourishment through his long career as an educator was undoubtedly the Pundit Club, a select group of professional men to which Strong himself belonged for forty-nine years, from 1872 until his death. "Pundit Club" was the nickname which practically supplanted the official name, "The Club." A local intellectual and literary venture, the club was founded in 1854 by Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881), father of American anthropology and author of Ancient Society (1877), in which he set out the doctrine of the common origin and psychic unity of all races and expressed his theory of racial evolution through successive stages of savagery, barbarism, and civilization. Morgan's own boldly inquiring spirit characterized the Pundit Club from the first. Members met to hear papers on every conceivable subject, accompanied by candid and vigorous

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[1]Cf. A. S. Carman, "A Great Theological Quintet," The Record (May, 1912), 26-27; The Baptist (December 10, 1921), 1420; J. R. Brown, "Dr. Strong as Denominational Leader," RTS Bulletin (Strong Number, May, 1922), 27-30; J. Strong, "Strong," Rochester Historical Society, IV (1925), 239-41; H. F. Remington, "Recollections of Rochester at the Close of the Nineteenth Century," ibid., XX (1942), 138.

[2]Cf. Henry B. Robins, "Dr. Strong as Lover and Writer of English," RTS Bulletin (May, 1922), 33-36. Several of Strong's volumes consist chiefly of public addresses: Philosophy and Religion (New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1888); The Great Poets and Their Theology (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1897); Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism (1899); Miscellanies (2 vols.: 1912); One Hundred Chapel Talks (1913); Popular Lectures on the Books of the New Testament (Philadelphia: Griffith and Rowland, 1914); and American Poets and Their Theology (Philadelphia: Griffith and Rowland, 1916).

discussion. Up to 1911 better than seven hundred papers had been presented; the club was indeed a caldron for the intellectual ferment of the time. Considering the unlimited range of topics, the freedom with which each was discussed, and the wide representation of learned men, it is not amiss to conclude that the Pundit Club was the chief place in Rochester where the water struck the wheel in regard to the challenge of the scientific revolution for men who were the molders of opinion.

A favored theme for club discussions through the decades to 1900 was the relation of science, particularly the scientific method, to other disciplines. In 1871 E. G. Robinson, who was a club member ahead of Strong, read a paper on theology as related to scientific method. Also, among the presentations made, there was a veritable harvest of treatments of evolutionary themes, and considerable attention to social criticism. In his years in the club, Strong's presentations were mainly on major literary figures--his "summer hobby"--but he also dealt with political economy (1873), Herbert Spencer's philosophy (1878), education for women (1882), Schleiermacher (1902), as well as some history, biography, theology, philosophy, travelogue, and the like. Strong's addresses before the club "indicated a sweep of vision, a versatility, and a capacity of literary appreciation rarely possessed by a single person," so that he was regarded by fellow club members as "quite as much of a literary critic as a theologian." But his erudite friends did not miss the effect of the club upon his principal work:

> It has been observed by many that the views of Doctor Strong seemed to undergo some change from the stricter dogmatism of earlier days to a more liberal spirit of later years, due to the modified acceptance of the theory of evolution, which was already accepted as the scientific creed of many of his associates.[1]

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[1] William Carey Morey, "Reminiscences of 'The Pundit Club,'" Rochester Historical Society, II (1923), 112. For the history of the club, cf. pp. 100-26; and Robert M. Kendrick, The Club, 1854-1937 (Rochester: 1938). Topics of all papers read before the club are given by Kendrick, as is also

This interchange of ideas within the club was not, however, the only direct channel for evolutionary concepts to reach the mind of A. H. Strong. There was also his close friendship with naturalist Henry A. Ward (1834-1906), pioneer in the development of museum displays calculated to show the process of evolution clearly and as a whole. Strong regarded Ward as "a born scientist" who "wished to show the progress of life from the protozoa upward to man."[1]

What the Pundit Club furnished in a local and frequent way in Rochester throughout our whole period, the Baptist Congress for the Discussion of Current Questions provided annually on a denominational level during the three decades from 1882 through 1913. This unofficial congress was exactly what its name implied: an open marketplace for the display and exchange of ideas from every quarter of opinion within the denomination. Here leading Baptists--pastors, educators, and laymen, from north and south, east and west--gathered to discuss crucial issues confronting the Christian church. It was a sign of good denominational health. Regrettably, the opinions expressed tended, after a time, to harden into concrete views and a party spirit grew to such an extent that the once-enthusiastically-supported Baptist Congress passed from the scene with hardly a murmur. It was a victim not so much of indifference as of a failure, even an unwillingness, to communicate across party lines--a victim of the loss of nerve within the denomination. Perhaps the Baptist Congress died when it was most needed--but that is to anticipate what we will

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the club roster, which for the years 1854 to 1928 includes for the periods indicated the following persons of the RTS faculty: E. G. Robinson (1856-72), A. H. Strong (1872-1921), H. Osgood (1878-98), B. O. True (1885-1902), John Strong (1905-14), C. H. Woelfkin (1910-12), C. A. Barbour (1915-28), G. Cross (1923-28).

[1]Strong, "Reminiscences," Rochester Historical Society, IV (1925), 302. For his full evaluation, see Strong, Henry A. Ward, Reminiscence and Appreciation (Rochester: Rochester Historical Society, 1922), pp. 7-34.

return to later. Suffice for now to note that, for many Baptists in America from the 1880's to 1913, when the winds of change blew, they blew first and strongest through and from the Baptist Congress. Rochester Seminary professors made important contributions to the deliberations in the Congress. Strong himself gave two major addresses: in 1890, on "The Divine Immanence in Recent Theology," and in 1898, on "The Fall and the Redemption of Man in the Light of Evolution."[1]

It is plain from what has been said that Strong did not try to dam the streams of thought in his time, either for himself or for those about him. As a consequence, his own views did not remain set, but grew and changed. Particularly were the contours of his thought altered as a result of evolutionary conceptions and biblical criticism. In his own mind he was generally open to the consideration of new ideas, but his personal mannerisms, as well as his pedagogical methods, often communicated a very different impression. In the classroom he was king over all, ruling not for the sake of ruling but in order to make his students think. He worked his students because he respected them and trusted their abilities; he had faith in young men and "he constantly discovered strong men." He himself was no reed blown in the wind. He insisted that "a teacher must reach definite conclusions. Hence, he could be exceedinly dogmatic."[2] One Rochester alumnus pointed out that Strong "dominates most of his pupils while they are with him and sometimes for years after they have left his classroom." This sort of personal domination tended to come out on the part of the apprentice in a parroting of the teacher's

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[1]Cf. Proceedings of the Baptist Congress for the Discussion of Current Questions (1882-1912). A typescript of the 1913 session is in the library of the American Baptist Historical Society. For an evaluation of the Congress by one of its founders, cf. Norman Cox, "The Baptist Congress," in A Century of Baptist Achievement, ed. A. H. Newman (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1901), pp. 288-93.

[2]C. H. Moehlman, "Dr. Strong as Teacher," RTS Bulletin (Strong Number, May, 1922), 19.

system of doctrine. For this reason, it was reported that, "almost to a man," his pupils "can pass a strict ordination council." But these very same pupils had been taught to think, so that "in from one to ten years after graduation a goodly crop of 'heretics' is found on the alumni role."[1]

As a leader and executive, Strong was "somewhat autocratic and absolute," though "dogmatic in manner and positive in statement much more than in spirit." A firm though benevolent ruler, he was "by nature, training, and bearing" a true aristocrat; those who met him "felt it." Yet, from boyhood on, his closest friends called him "Gus," a name deemed "inappropriate" to some of his students who were nevertheless thankful for what the nickname seemed to indicate: "he too was made of common clay."[2] That he was difficult to approach did not mean he was any less the friend and valued counselor of students.[3]

Strong's practice demonstrated an apt sense of priorities regarding the three principal elements of an educational institution--brains, books, and bricks. Important in their own right, bricks or physical facilities were, for Strong, always secondary to either or both of the other elements. Students--good students--were admired and sought after, and Strong knew they were attracted by a capable faculty. And he recognized the importance of a useful library to both. When he became president of the seminary the library collection was so limited that students were allowed to visit it only one hour each day, and then only if accompanied by an instructor. From the first

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[1]Taft, "Two Remarkable Men," The Standard (January 18, 1913), 578. Cf. A. C. Baldwin, "The Ministry After Fifty Years," The Chronicle, XVI, (January, 1953), 9.

[2]Taft, "Two Remarkable Men," The Standard (January 18, 1913), 577-78.

[3]Cf. J. W. Nixon, "Dr. Strong as Friend and Counselor of His Students," RTS Bulletin (Strong Number, May, 1922), 20-22.

he set out to change this by securing a solid collection of theological literature. In 1883 he told the trustees that "no amount of teaching can compensate for the absence of the best works of the day." To improve the situation during his administration $127,000 permanent library endowment was secured, and the shelf-holdings were quintupled to 39,000 volumes. At his retirement in 1912 he said in a private note to the librarian: "I want to make our library a model in all respects. . . . Not mere numbers of books, but in completeness and sterling worth within the limited range of a special theological collection." The one who received that note later remarked that, "as president," Strong "would have been a joy to any librarian. He rightly appraised the teaching value of a library, and knew that it was worth what it cost."[1]

Strong's relation to his faculty had two aspects. First, he looked upon the other professors as colleagues, fellow-workers, peers in their respective fields. He was interested in and sympathetic with the aims and problems of every professor. Though in the breadth of his scholarship and in his ability to adapt he was equipped to handle the work of any department, "he was never officious--never meddled. Having secured a man whom he thought competent, he left him free to do his work in his own way." But that he did not meddle does not mean that he was not aware of what his colleagues were doing. He watched them, every one being customarily generous in expressing "cordial appreciation and approval of their work." He was proud of them and grateful for them.

> The older members had been with him so long that he seemed to lean on them, to seek their counsel. The younger men who were brought in from the ranks of his former pupils, he welcomed with peculiar joy.[2]

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[1]Glenn B. Ewell, "Dr. Strong in His Care for the Library," RTS Bulletin (Strong Number, May, 1922), 26-27.

[2]John P. Silvernail, "Dr. Strong in Relation to His Fellow Faculty Members," RTS Bulletin (Strong Number, May, 1922), 14-16.

And he stood forthrighly for the freedom of his men to think their own thoughts and to sow them to the wind. In 1907, after the publication of Christianity and the Social Crisis, Walter Rasucehbnsuch came under fire, even within the circle of the seminary trustees. The president of the Board, a Cincinnati businessman, wrote President Strong a letter demanding the resignation of Professor Rauschenbusch. Pressure came from other quarters. But President Strong stood fast beside his beleaguered colleague, and in effect made it clear that if Rauschenbusch had to go to the cross, he too must go.[1] Thus, for those who knew what was happening, Strong quietly and unambiguously demonstrated that, for him, a theological school was indeed a seminary--a "seed-plot" for the cultivation of ideas--and, more, a school of the prophets. Little wonder, then, that Strong's associates admired him so, even when they could not agree with him. In academic excellence he set the pace; he was an admirable colleague; as administrators go, he was a professor's president.

The other side of Strong's relation to his faculty was that of his official function. He was the president, the executive; no one forgot that. Apparently, faculty meetings were held only spasmodically. The faculty minutes for the academic year 1896-97 record the intention to hold "regular" meetings. But the best laid plans of mice and men--after a few meetings near the beginning of the school term, great gaps of inordinate duration occur between recorded sessions. This lack of pattern seemed to be the pattern, and one gets the distinct impression that the faculty met only when Strong decided there was a reason. There is no evidence, however, that others felt hampered because the faculty did not meet more often. When they did meet to consider such things as "questions pertaining to the curriculum or matters of discipline,

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[1]Cf. Dores Robinson Sharpe, Walter Rauschenbusch (New York: Macmillan, 1942), pp. 155-56; Moehlman, "Walter Rauschenbusch and His Interpreters," Crozer Quarterly, XXIII (January, 1946), 39.

or general policies of the seminary, . . . the freest discussion was encouraged." Strong preferred that many such things "should be decided by faculty action," and "there was never any disposition on the part of the president to over-ride the judgment of the faculty." On matters that he considered limited to the range of his own prerogative, he frequently sought faculty opinio, but, as a colleague observed, "it was quite apparent that 'where Macgregor sat was the head of the table.'"[1] Being president, Strong must have regarded himself as the only best advocate of the school's cause in distant public gatherings, particularly denominational conventions and the like, for almost without exception he served as the lone official representative of the seminary on such occasions.[2]

II

In general it could be said that Strong presided over three different faculties during his four decades at Rochester. The first was the group which had previously worked alongside President Robinson and which welcomed Strong in 1872 when he took up his new duties; these we dealt with in the first chapter. Then there was a faculty of his own composition, four men who, together with himself, were remembered as "the Big Five."[3] As it happened, Strong outlived all these men--men of his own generation--so that it fell to him to gather yet a third constellation of scholars. To a man this last group, the younger generation, was not content to march in the old way, much less to stand still; this was the liberal generation.

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[1]Silvernail, RTS Bulletin (Strong Number, May, 1922), 15.

[2]Interview with Glenn B. Ewell, February 26, 1964.

[3]Cf. J. W. A. Stewart, "More Recent Days," RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 47. For an appreciative article, see A. S. Carman, "A Great Theological Quintet," RTS Bulletin (May, 1912), 26-27.

First and always foremost among the Big Five was A. H. Strong himself, who came to the seminary in 1872. The other four members of this remarkable quintet were drawn together within the short compass of six years during Strong's first decade as president. In 1875 the first, Howard Osgood (1831-1911),[1] was added; he became professor of Hebrew language and literature. Two years later, in 1877, William Arnold Stevens (1839-1910)[2] joined the faculty; his field was New Testament exegesis and interpretation. Along with Stevens came Albert Henry Newman (1852-1933), destined for eminence as a church historian; but Newman suffered from scholar's restlessness and did not long remain at Rochester, leaving in 1881 to go to McMaster University in Ontario. To replace Newman in church history, Benjamin Osgood True (1845-1902)[3] was added in 1881, the same year in which Thomas Harwood Pattison (1838-1904),[4] an Englishman, was brought in as professor of homiletics and

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[1]Born at Magnolia Plantation, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, January 4, 1831. Studied at Harvard University, 1846-49; B.A., 1858. Pastor at Flushing, Long Island, 1856-59, and at New York City, 1860-65. Professor of Hebrew, Crozer Theological Seminary, 1868-74. At RTS: acting professor of church history, 1875-76; Hoyt professor of Hebrew language and literature, 1876-1900; librarian 1875-1901. Literary work at Rochester, 1900-11. Died at Rochester, November 28, 1911.

[2]Born at Granville, Ohio, February 5, 1839. B.A., Denison University, 1862; studied at RTS, 1862-63; classical tutor at Denison University, 1863-65; studied philology and theology at Harvard University, University of Leipzig and University of Berlin, 1865-68. Professor of Greek language and literature, Denison University, 1868-77. At RTS: Trevor professor of biblical literature and New Testament exegesis, 1877-1910. Died at Rochester, January 2, 1910.

[3]Born at Plainfield, New Hampshire, December 17, 1845. B.A., Dartmouth College, 1866; graduated from RTS, 1870. Pastor at Baldwinsville, New York, 1870-72; in Europe, 1872; pastor at Meriden, Connecticut, 1873-79; in Europe and the East, 1879-80, 1889-90; pastor at Providence, Rhode Island, 1880-81. At RTS: professor of church history, 1881-1902. Died at Lakeport, New Hampshire, July 18, 1902.

[4]Born at Launceston, Cornwall, England, December 14, 1838. Graduated from Regents Park College, London, 1862. Pastor of two English churches for several years; at New Haven, Connecticut, 1875-78; at Albany, New York, 1878-81. At RTS: Wyckoff professor of homiletics and pastoral theology, 1881-1904. Died at Rochester, February 13, 1904.

pastoral theology. Thus, by 1881 the quintet was complete: Strong, Osgood, Stevens, True, and Pattisón. At the close of their first year together President Strong told the trustees: "In my judgment the institution was never before so well provided with teachers."[1]

These five men labored together, their ranks unbroken, for just one year shy of two decades. Among them, the shortest tenure at Rochester was that of Professor True--twenty-one years--and the longest, aside from Strong, that of Stevens--thirty-three years. In age they were close together, with but fourteen years separating the youngest, True, from the oldest, Osgood. When these men went to Rochester, they settled for their life's work. The first break in their circle occurred with Osgood's retirement in 1900 at the age of sixty-nine. Soon thereafter three others died in service to the seminary--True in 1902, Pattison in 1904, Stevens in 1910. Thus, within the dozen years from Osgood's retirement in 1900 to Strong's in 1912, the Big Five were all gone from active duty, almost as suddenly as they had appeared. And in 1912 only Strong remained alive, having outlived all his colleagues. Meanwhile, he had chosen another and very different faculty.

Strong's third faculty, the group which succeeded the Big Five, was gathered during the two decades centering on 1900. The leading men in this third faculty were to play major roles in the liberalizing of the Rochester Theological Seminary. First of the group was Walter Robert Betteridge (1863-1916),[2] a Rochester alumnus who was kept on after graduation to assist Professor Osgood, whom he later replaced as professor of Hebrew language and

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[1] Annual Report of the Union, 1882, p. 32.

[2] Born at Riga, New York, December 16, 1863. B.A., University of Rochester, 1888; graduated RTS, 1891; studied at University of Göttingen and University of Berlin, 1895-96; in Europe and Palestine, 1909-10. At RTS: assistant professor of Hebrew language and literature, 1892-1900; acting professor, 1900-01; Hoyt professor, 1901-16; librarian, 1901-13. Died at Rochester, March 2, 1916.

literature and as librarian. The second of the liberal group was also a son of Rochester, Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918),[1] who was brought back to his alma mater in 1897 to fill a place in the German Department and in 1902 was elevated to the chair of church history in the seminary proper. The next of the liberals was Joseph William Alexander Stewart (1852-1948),[2] who for sixteen years had been Strong's pastor in Rochester; Stewart was made professor of ethics and pastoral theology and the school's first dean in 1903. Two years later Cornelius Woelfkin (1859-1928)[3] was added to teach homiletics. Finally, the liberal cluster was filled out with the bringing to the faculty of Conrad Henry Moehlman (1879-1961),[4] another Rochester

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[1]Born at Rochester, October 4, 1861. Graduated from Gymnasium in Gutersloh, Westphalia, Germany, 1883; B.A., University of Rochester, 1884; graduated from RTS, 1886. Pastor of German Baptist Church, New York City, 1886-97. In the German Department, RTS; acting professor of New Testament interpretation and the natural sciences, 1897-99; professor of New Testament, 1899-1902. At RTS: professor of church history, 1902-18. Studied in Germany, 1891-92 and 1907-08. Died at Rochester, July 25, 1918.

[2]Born at Waterloo, Ontario, January 17, 1852. Studied at University of Toronto, 1876; graduated from Woodstock College, 1879. Pastor of churches in Ontario Province, 1876-87; and of First Baptist Church, Rochester, 1887-1903. Acting professor of homiletics, McMaster University, 1885-86. At RTS: dean and professor of Christian ethics and pastoral theology, 1903-23; acting president, 1912-15; professor emeritus, 1923-48. Died at Rochester, June 26, 1948.

[3]Born at New York City, September 15, 1859. Pastor of churches in New Jersey, 1887-94; and Brooklyn, 1894-1905. Evangelism secretary, American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1905-06. At RTS: Wyckoff professor of homiletics, 1905-12. Pastor of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, New York City, 1912-28. Died at New York City, January 6, 1928.

[4]Born at Meriden, Connecticut, May 26, 1879. B.A., University of Michigan, 1902; B.D., RTS, 1905; M.A., University of Rochester, 1917; Ph.D., University of Michigan, 1918. Pastor at Central City, Nebraska, 1905-06. Graduate studies at University of Chicago, 1908-09; and University of Michigan, 1917-18. At RTS: instructor of church history, 1907-08; instructor of Hebrew language and literature, 1909-10; associate professor of biblical languages, 1910-13; Huntley professor of English Bible and biblical theology, 1913-14; Trevor professor of New Testament interpretation, 1914-18; Pettingill professor of church history, 1918-28. At CRDS: James B. Colgate professor of the history of Christianity, 1928-44; professor emeritus, 1944-61. Died at Avon Park, Florida, September 19, 1961.

product; brilliant and able to adapt, Moehlman taught across a wide spectrum of the biblical disciplines for several years before occupying the chair of church history.

Thus, by 1909 Strong's third faculty, the liberal vanguard, was together. In that year, aside from Strong, only Stevens remained of the Big Five, and he died the following January. So, Strong was left with these five men, these five liberals, whom he had chosen--Betteridge, Rauschenbusch, Stewart, Woelfkin, and Moehlman. And they were, for the most part, products of Rochester--in a sense, Strong's own spiritual offspring in the ministry of teaching. These men played leading roles in the theological transition at Rochester. But they were not alone. There was at least one other person for whom a major role was cut out; this was John Henry Strong (1886-1960),[1] son of President Strong. He joined Professor Stevens in the New Testament department in 1904. To John Strong we will return subsequently.

These were the men whom President Strong gathered about himself--the members of the Big Five and of the third faculty. In addition to these, the leading actors, there were several who took minor roles and bit parts: John Philips Silvernail (1851-1930), who was around from 1891 to 1923 but was never advanced beyond the level of acting professor of elocution and oratory; John Henry Mason (1850-1929), professor of English Bible from 1903 to 1913; and Henry C. Mabie (1847-1918), who filled in for President Strong in theology in 1908-09 and, thereafter, offered Rochester's first regular work in missions. With these men, the main actors as well as those who

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[1]Born at Cleveland, Ohio, December 7, 1866. B.A., University of Rochester, 1889, and Yale University, 1890; graduated RTS, 1893. Pastor at Cincinnati, 1894-96; New Briton, Connecticut, 1897-1903. New Testament studies at University of Berlin and University of Marburg, 1903-04. At RTS: associate professor of New Testament interpretation, 1904-10; Trevor professor, 1910-13. Studied at University of Halle and University of Berlin, 1913. Pastor at Baltimore, Maryland, 1914-21. Professor of New Testament exegesis at Biblical Seminary, New York City, 1922-29; retired, 1929. Died at Santa Barbara, California, January 19, 1960.

took the minor roles, Strong had to live, for good or ill. To see something of how well he wrought as seminary president in his time, we will look next at the general characteristics of the thought of these principal men of his second and third faculties, noting also something of their relationship to one another. But, in order better to understand them, we must first look at the main contours of the thought of A. H. Strong himself.

III

Just as Strong had three faculties at Rochester, so also, it might be said, his theology had three phases; and they were not unrelated to the three faculties. The first was his received orthodoxy; the second was a positive and progressive outgrowth of the first; and the third was a reactionary polemic. The first was more traditional; the second, expansive and inclusive, though still traditional; the third, less expanisve and seemingly less inclusive because chiefly defensive. The early stage coincided with the beginning of his career as teacher; the middle more positive period paralleled the era of the Big Five; and the final defensive phase was a reaction to what he considered to be excesses in the liberalism of his later years. Two other interpreters of Strong have also noted three main phases in the development of his thought. Carl F. H. Henry sees three stages of successive liberalizing in which Strong became steadily less orthodox; Henry's three stages are equivalent to the first two mentioned above, with an intermediate, somewhat ambivalent one sandwiched between.[1] Henry neglects to notice Strong's final defensive and negative stage. Much closer to what is here being suggested is Professor Moehlman's recognition of "three

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[1] Cf. Henry, Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology (Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, 1951), p. 15. Henry's work, originally a Ph.D. Dissertation at Boston University, is the most comprehensive published study of Strong's theology.

periods in the career of Dr. Strong," two of which, the first and the last, were marked by a tendency toward "thought conservatism."[1]

The basic content of Strong's earlier theology--his received orthodoxy--was given permanent expression in the Lectures on Theology which he had printed for the convenience of his students in 1876. Here was another late Calvinistic system, a form of Protestant scholasticism. In a manner probably learned at Yale from Noah Porter,[2] Strong began by postulating the existence of God as a "first truth," a "rational intuition," not derived from but developed upon the occasion of observation and reflection. The traditional theistic proofs--in themselves "probable, not demonstrative"--serve to explicate the contents of this universal intuitive awareness of God's existence.[3] Having arrived at this point, the next logical move was to ask how God, who is known to exist, communicates with man, to which the logical answer was through the Bible. The Scriptures are "a revelation from God." Strong then showed how miracles and prophecy attest this scriptural revelation.[4] He held that the Bible is inspired, not mechanically, however, but "dynamically"--that is, he took inspiration as having to do with thoughts rather than dictated words. Inspiration was not dependent on inerrancy, though in fact no scientific or historical or moral errors do exist in the pages of the Bible.[5] Thus, the Bible is an "infallible and sufficient rule of faith and practice."[6]

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[1] RTS Bulletin (Strong Number, May, 1922), 19.

[2] Cf. Porter, The Human Intellect, part IV, chap. 1.

[3] Strong, Lectures on Theology (Rochester: E. R. Andrews, 1876), pp. 17ff.

[4] Ibid., pp. 33-37.

[5] Ibid., pp. 53, 55-57.

[6] Ibid., p. 50.

Given this sort of Bible, Strong was ready to articulate a theology which he regarded as genuinely biblical, But, as we have seen, he had not really started with the Bible. He had started instead with a "rational intuition." That is, in typical scholastic fashion he began with a rational demonstration of the existence of God, and only thereafter moved on to revelation, in effect using reason to confirm revelation and then revelation to correct reason. This point, in fact, he made quite explicitly in remarks before the Baptist Congress in 1892: "The Scripture comes to reason, presents its credentials, proves its credentials to be sufficient; and then Scripture, and not reason, sits upon the throne."[1] Strong was simply saying in different words what he first put down in his original Lectures in Theology. The importance of this initial publication can hardly be overestimated, for thus early Strong erected for his ideas a foundation and a framework that he never subsequently altered. Both the rationalist point of departure and the basic outline of this first work were precisely followed in every one of eight successive editions of his Systematic Theology, from the first in 1886 to the last in 1907-09. We will see that some of his later ideas could only with difficulty be fitted into this structure.

It would be exceedingly difficult to get much excited over the system of doctrine Strong was hammering out in the 1870's. At best, it might engender some interest as a clear example of a certain way, a certain particularly rationalistic way, of doing theology. As a bit of history, most of us are willing to leave it there. In 1889 Strong himself referred back to his early stage and reported of himself:

> I knew much more theology then than I do now. . . . I had the impression that nothing new was true, and that a theological school was set mainly to defend the ancient faith. . . . Today . . . I recognize the fact that modern science and philosophy

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[1] Proceedings of the Baptist Congress, 1892, p. 202.

> have thrown great light upon the world's problems, and that it is now the duty of the theologian and of the preacher to bring forth out of his treasure things new as well as old.[1]

In this evaluation of his earlier thought Strong must have had his tongue at least part way in his cheek, for, though he felt doggedly certain of a number of things in the 1870's, his mind was anything but closed to new ideas. As early as 1868, for instance, while he was at Cleveland, he was looking with favor upon evolution, suggesting it might be interpreted as "a mode of divine action."[2] If he was ahead of most of his contemporaries he was only demonstrating that inquisitiveness which characterized his thought throughout his life. His was a philosophical theology, a theology not compartmentalized to itself but in the mainstream of life, moving in relation to the thought-currents of the time.

Strong's openness to new ideas reached its creative climax in the second phase of his theology, the results of which are set out most fully in the massive eighth edition of the Systematic Theology. But to find the new ideas in the great bulk of that work is something like looking for a needle in a haystack; or, more appropriately, it is analogous to searching through a decree from the Second Vatican Council to see what new thing the church fathers are saying. The problem is that, on the surface, this last edition of the Systematic Theology looks like the 1876 Lectures on Theology writ large, blown up, and filled out. After the prolegomena, the author takes up, just as before, "The Existence of God," and then moves on quickly to "The Scriptures a Revelation from God." By now, however, he no longer speaks of the Bible as infallible or inerrant, but rather as "sufficient"

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[1]Strong, Miscellanies, I, p. 251.

[2]Strong, Philosophy and Religion, p. 28.

for its intended purpose.[1] With the Bible thus in place all else follows, and Strong deals, in turn, with "The Nature, Decrees, and Works of God"; "Anthropology"; "Soteriology"; and so on to the end of things--"Eschatology." The whole consists of some thousand pages of fine and microscopic print. It is an admirable work, never verbose but amazingly chaste for all its bulk, immense in its scope and impressive in its erudition, the finest fruit of a lifetime of theological endeavor, and, because so inclusive and so carefully indexed, a veritable encyclopedia of Christian doctrine. But all that bulk and all that erudition was not alone enough to make the treatise win its way in its own time. And one of the traits of the period in which it appeared was a disenchantment with systematic theology.[2] In 1914 Lyman Abbott, grand old man among American liberals, looking back over the three quarters of a century of his life, could remember only one book on systematic theology that deserved to be called "religious," and it just happened to be one of the few American liberal systematic attempts.[3] Thus, Strong's work had much to overcome at the outset, and that it should appear in the first decade of the twentieth century within that same rationalist framework first worked out in the 1870's made all the more unlikely its acceptance by the vanguard of men working on the threshold of new ideas for a new age. To many such men Strong's Systematic Theology must have looked

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[1]Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 196. On errors in the Bible, cf. pp. 222-42.

[2]Cf. Walter Marshall Horton, "Systematic Theology," in Protestant Thought In The Twentieth Century, ed. Arnold S. Nash (New York: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 105-21; G. B. Smith, Religious Thought in the Last Quarter-Century, pp. 95-115.

[3]Abbott, Reminiscences, p. 485. The volume to which he referred was William Newton Clark's Outline of Christian Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898).

about as it did to a professor at nearby Auburn Theological Seminary, who stated in a review article what seemed so obvious, that Strong "is controlled by the traditional method and point of view," that "he pours his old wine into the old bottles, and even retains the old labels and corks." Then, for the reader's benefit, this reviewer added:

> Many of us believe that the older thought-terms and the traditional method are obsolescent if not quite obsolete. Only such a vigorous personality as Dr. Strong's can galvanize them into semblance to living forms of thought. . . . This volume aids us very little in attaining a satisfying point of view or in mastering principles that will be both congenial and authoritative for the thinking of the age that has dawned.[1]

If they happened to read it, a review like that must have reassured some of Strong's traditionalist friends among the Baptists, some of whom on earlier occasions had wondered about the steadiness of his faith. But the conservative Baptist press did not need a Presbyterian liberal from Auburn to tell them about Strong; they could read his book for themselves, and supposedly they did. The Watchman of Boston delighted in designating Strong's work "the authoritative standard for the views of those who for convenience are called the champions of the Old Theology."[2] And The Examiner of New York City put it in language the people could understand:

> Dr. Strong founds his theology on the only source of sound doctrine, the divinely inspired Word of God. This inevitably gives it the aspect of conservatism. It is 'old-fashioned'—but then, so is the Bible. . . . His theology is 'sound,' in the sense usually attributed to that word.[3]

And, out in Cincinnati, where Strong's ideas had not always been warmly received, the Journal and Messenger gave this report to the Baptist people of that area: "Some of [Strong's] friends," said the editor, "have feared

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[1]Herbert A. Youtz, in American Journal of Theology, XIII, (July, 1909), 468-70.

[2]Quoted in The Record (May, 1909), 13. [3]Ibid.

that he was getting away from the truth as understood by them." But the new edition of the Systematic Theology should stay all fears. At a time when so many are turning aside,

> it is the more gratifying to find one whose influence is so widespread and whose position so conspicuous still adhering firmly to the tenets of our Baptist fathers, his feet planted firmly on the impregnable rock of Holy Scriptures. . . . Just now he stands out as the champion of the evangelical faith.[1]

Strong himself would have been much gratified that those who regarded themselves as conservative and traditional should have found his work useful, for he was himself deliberately and eminently conservative. But his conservatism was not of a biblicist sort, as many took it to be, but catholic. He was conscious of traditional Christianity, particularly the Augustinian-Calvinist stream in which he stood, and he valued that tradition too greatly to dismiss it or to think its usefulness outworn. What he wanted to do was to stand within that tradition and, from that perspective, restate Christian theology for his day. Obviously, some of his readers ran while they read and failed to sense what he was doing. One gets the decided impression that reviews of his works were written by people who never read them. Of course, some did read what Strong wrote, and one who did was his former colleague, historian Albert Henry Newman, capable and careful scholar who was, nonetheless, convinced that the angels were mostly on the side of the conservatives. And Newman never quite got over what he took to be Strong's abandonment of the true faith, and it must have pained him greatly that so few seemed to listen when he told them the truth about Strong. Anyway, Newman rarely missed an opportunity to point out where he thought Strong had gone astray.[2]

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[1] Journal and Messenger (January 31, 1907), 6-7.

[2] Cf. Newman, "Recent Changes in the Theology of Baptists," American Journal of Theology, X (October, 1906), 596-97; "Strong's Systematic Theology,"

Among the things that disturbed Newman was Strong's acceptance of evolution and higher criticism. Strong was cordial to both, as he never tired of reminding others, but he never really went very far with either one. His reticence on both is seen in his treatment of the creation narrative given in the first chapter of Genesis. He denies the validity of a "hyperliteral" as well as a "hyperscientific" interpretation, the first because it takes no account of scientific data and the second (which holds a precise correspondence between the biblical record and the scientific evidence) because it imposes the Bible and science upon one another in an unrealistic manner.[1] He shows, then, that he wants to account for the findings of science and that he is not bound to take the Genesis narrative literally. But he does not, therefore, accept an "allegorical" or "mythical" interpretation, that is, some conception of the narrative as consisting of "the poetic speculations of an early race as to the origin of the present system." This he rejects "upon the ground that the narrative of creation is inseparably connected with the succeeding history, and is therefore most naturally regarded as itself historical." He then indicated how in his mind he was struggling between the newer views and the old literalism when he claimed that this account was "probably the record of an original revelation to the first man, handed down to Moses' time, and used by Moses as a proper introduction to his history."[2]

It is difficult to reconcile this last statement with Strong's admission elsewhere in this edition of the Systematic Theology of the "substantial correctness" of a modified form of the documentary theory of the

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Review and Expositor, II (January, 1905), 41-66; "Dogma," in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1909), III, p. 478.

[1]Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 395. [2]Ibid., p. 394.

origin of the Pentateuch, according to which the Genesis 1 material was dated centuries later than Moses. As to the documentary hypothesis in general, Strong said:

> It simply shows God's actual method in making up the record of his revelation. We may add that any scholar who grants that Moses did not himself write the account of his own death and burial in the last chapter of Deuteronomy, or who recognizes two differing accounts of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, has already begun an analysis of the Pentateuch and has accepted the essential principles of the higher criticism.[1]

Apparently, while Strong accepted the higher criticism in principle, he did not work many of its results into his own thought.

To return to his treatment of the creation narrative, we recall that he rejected the hyperliteral, the hyperscientific, and the allegorical or mythical interpretations. His own approach was what he called the "pictorial-summary" interpretation, that is, he took the account to be "a rough sketch of the history of creation, true in all its essential features."[2] This differs from the hyperscientific interpretation only in being less rigid. As for the relation between creation and evolution, Strong did not adopt the Spencerian approach, for, though he believed in progress, he never regarded it as inevitable. Darwinism he found more acceptable, since it could account for devolution as well as evolution, and was therefore more hospitable to the traditional Christian conception of the fall of man.[3] His own view of evolution, however, was really more in harmony with Lyell's geology than with Spencer's philosophy or Darwin's biology. For not only did Strong maintain that the biblical narrative is a "rough sketch" of geological history, but he also accepted the doctrine of "catastrophic change," that is, that "nature proceeded . . . by leaps, and corresponding to the leaps of

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[1] Ibid., p. 172.

[2] Ibid., p. 393; cf. pp. 395-97.

[3] Cf. ibid., pp. 470-71.

geology we find leaps of biology."[1] In this way he could account for the origin of species, especially man. Thus he struck a sort of happy medium between continuous development and fiat creation. But, though this was his favored view, he was pointedly tentative and unwilling to dogmatize, open to change in the light of further evidence. The main point of his evolutionary doctrine was to emphasize that "God's life is in all" and that "God is not limited to creating from without: he can also create from within; and development is as much a part of creation as is the origination of the elements."[2]

This emphasis on the divine life "in all" and on creation "from within" suggests another aspect of Strong's theology that disturbed Newman and disturbed him deeply. This was what Strong called his "ethical monism," a notion which became the ruling idea in his thought through his most progressive period. His ethical monism was first articulated in a series of controversial articles published in The Examiner in 1894 and 1895[3] and later collected and re-issued along with other material in the volume entitled Christ in Creation and Ethical Monism (1899). These essays mark "a turning point in Strong's theology."[4] They were originally sent forth as "a series of guesses at truth,"[5] but by the 1907 edition of the Systematic Theology the main theme developed in them was being called "the key to theology."[6] Whereas the principal idea for his earlier, rationalist phase

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[1] Ibid., p. 392; cf. p. 470. [2] Ibid., p. 393.

[3] Two series of three articles each on "Ethical Monism" and "Ethical Monism Once More" appeared in The Examiner in November, 1894, and October, 1895. A related article on "Christ in Creation" appeared October 6, 1892.

[4] Henry, Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology, p. 95.

[5] Strong, Christ in Creation, p. vii.

[6] Strong, Systematic Theology, p. vii.

came from Noah Porter, the central concept of this later, more positive phase Strong himself attributed almost wholly to the influence of E. G. Robinson.[1]

Ethical monism was Strong's way of combining and holding together the notion of a "single substance, ground, or principle of being" with the doctrine that man and the material order, as such, are finally distinguishable both from one another and from their common basal source, God. "Metaphysical monism" was qualified by "psychological dualism."[2] Here Strong was setting forth both God's active presence within and distinction from the created order. The God in, with, and under is also the God beyond and above. This really opened the door for a distinctively Christian naturalism, though Strong did not speak of such. By his use of the term "monism" he meant to affirm divine immanence as well as the essential oneness of the natural order. But to save his monism from pantheism, he added the word "ethical":

> While Ethical Monism embraces the one element of truth contained in Pantheism--the truth that God is in all things and that all things are in God--it regards this scientific unity as entirely consistent with the facts of ethics--man's freedom, responsibility, sin, and guilt. . . .
>
> In contrast then with the two errors of Pantheism--the denial of God's transcendence and the denial of God's personality--Ethical Monism holds that the universe, instead of being one with God and coterminous with God, is but a finite, partial and progressive manifestation of the divine Life: Matter being God's self-limitation under the law of Necessity; Humanity being God's self-limitation under the law of Freedom; Incarnation and Atonement being God's self-limitations under the law of Grace.[3]

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[1] Cf. Miscellanies, II, p. 64. Henry's thesis is that Strong was indebted for this idea chiefly to Rudolph Hermann Lotze and Borden Parker Bowne. Cf. Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology, pp. 95-102, 228-29.

[2] Strong, Systematic Theology, pp. 105-06.

[3] Ibid., pp. 106-07.

This was a form of personal idealism in which the divine personality was regarded "as distinct from, and as guaranteeing, the personality of man."[1]

This philosophical doctrine of ethical monism Strong expressed christologically in the phrase "Christ in creation," by which he implied a thorough-going Logos christology, identifying Christ with "the immanent God, with God revealed in Nature, in Humanity, in Redemption." Or, as he put it,

> Ethical Monism recognizes the universe as created, upheld and governed by the same Being who in the course of history was manifest in human form and who made atonement for human sin by his death on Calvary. The secret of the universe and the key to its mysteries are to be found in the Cross.
>
> That Christ is the one and only Revealer of God, in nature, in humanity, in history, in science, in Scripture, is in my judgment the key to theology. This view . . . recognizes evolution as only the method of the transcendent and personal Christ, who fills all in all, and who makes the universe teleological and moral from its centre to its circumference and from its beginning until now. Neither evolution nor the higher criticism has any terrors to one who regards them as parts of Christ's creating and educating process.[2]

Once this concept of what Strong often called "the larger Christ" became the keynote of his theology it dominated all his thought and was never thereafter abandoned—in principle, not even in the third and negative period.

Strong's christocentric approach was a doctrine of faith for the faithful: "only he who realizes this greatness [of Christ] by an inward experience can ever describe it."[3] Yet, for the man with eyes of faith the vision was grand and this was indeed a liberating doctrine, the implications of which reached into every realm of existence. Strong told the Baptist Congress in 1898:

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[1] Ibid., p. 105. [2] Ibid., pp. 109, vii.

[3] Strong, Miscellanies, I, p. 259.

> This conception of the larger Christ . . . is revivifying modern theology. We are digging out the debris with which scholasticism and deism have half filled the wells of salvation. . . . Now we perceive that Christ is the life of nature, and that all its quivering forces are the revelation of his omniscient mind and the energizing of his omnipotent will. Now we perceive that Christ is the life of humanity and that in him alone, the revealing God, we live and move and have our being, so that he is the Light that lighteth every man, so that conscience even among the heathen is the echo of his voice, so that history, even when we call it secular, is the marshalling of the forces of him who goes forth conquering and to conquer. Now we perceive that Christ is the life of the church, and that he is actually present not only in every individual believer as the soul of his soul and the life of his life, but in the great universal organism of his sacramental host, preserving it from corruption, endowing it with his Spirit, and leading it on to its final triumph.[1]

From his christocentric perspective Strong recognized that "the central subject and thought which binds all parts of the Bible together, and in the light of which they are to be interpreted, is the person and work of Jesus Christ."[2] Or, as he often put it, "the Christ who is behind and in the process guarantees the unity, the sufficiency, and the authority of Scripture."[3] What this meant regarding the question of authority is that

> the only ultimate authority is Christ himself. . . . The Scripture is the imperfect mirror of Christ. It is defective, yet it reflects him and leads to him. Authority resides not in it, but in him, and his Spirit enables the individual Christian and the collective church progressively to distinguish the essential from the non-essential, and so to perceive the truth as it is in Jesus. In thus judging Scripture and interpreting Scripture, we are not rationalists, but are rather believers.[4]

Thus, in his more positive phase, with regard to the Bible and authority, Strong was much closer than previously to his old teacher, E. G. Robinson.

Precisely because of and on the basis of his cosmic christology Strong stated the case for Christian duty in the public realm. In the

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[1]Strong, Christ in Creation, pp. 166-67.

[2]Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 217.

[3]Strong, One Hundred Chapel Talks, p. 31.

[4]Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 219; cf. Christ in Creation, pp. 113-36.

seminary chapel during his final year of teaching, he reminded the students that "Christianity aims at both reform and regeneration," though "it puts cause before effect, regeneration before reform."[1] By so stating the matter he was warning the students against regarding the gospel as only social. That is, they ought to seek the conversion of the individual but not leave undone the healing of society's ills. This is the really radical note, that regenerated men ought to work for social reform. The christocentric framework for Strong's social concern was made explicit in an address given in 1913:

> While regeneration is the indispensable inward beginning, Christ's Spirit works outwardly, to the reform of human society. The Christian cannot fold his hands and content himself with his individual salvation. . . . As the Creator and Upholder of the universe, Christ has a natural connection with every human heart, and service done to any human being is service done to him. But he is also the Creator of a new society; and to follow him is to enlist in all manner of effort for the reform of industrial and business and government relations, until these are pervaded by his Spirit. . . . The church is Christ's organ for individual regeneration, and Christians are Christ's organs for the regeneration of the social order.[2]

So, Strong's ethic grew out of, indeed was part and parcel with, his theology. "Doctrine without duty," he once said, "is indeed a tree without fruits," just as "duty without doctrine is a tree without roots."[3]

At a conference on peace in 1902--eleven years prior to the lengthy statement quoted above--Strong had applied his social ethic to the question of justice in war. He admitted quite realistically that there may, under certain circumstances, be such a thing as justice in war and, therefore, that, in settling international differences, war "will give way only to a tribunal in which justice is more rapid and unerring." His appeal, then,

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[1] One Hundred Chapel Talks, p. 180.

[2] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

[3] Miscellanies, I, p. 92.

was for good-will to "bend its energies not to vain outcry against war, but to the perfecting of its substitute." And the substitute he had in mind was an international court "where reference is compulsory and where decisions are final." Humanity has the right to establish such a court, he insisted, precisely because "rights of humanity are above rights of individuality--they are above rights of nationality also." This is to suggest that man is corporate as well as individual and that nations as well as autonomous persons may be self-centered and self-seeking, or, in other words, that there is corporate iniquity as well as individual, social as well as private sin. In the manifest sentiment for compulsory and universal arbitration Strong claimed to see

> the influence of the omnipresent Christ. He is moralizing the world, making keen its conscience, revealing to man his own better nature, putting truth and righteousness more and more into statutory form.[1]

On this basis in 1920 he expressed his "profound distress" over the failure of the United States Senate to ratify the treaty of Versailles.[2] The scope of such an ethic is sweeping and inclusive; only the blind would fail to see that it applies with full force not only to peace between nations, but to peace among men in every realm of life, not omitting race relations or economics. It is clear, then, that Strong incorporated into his thought the social gospel quite as much as evolution and biblical criticism. His was a theology for life in this world.

In his final work, a primer of doctrine published posthumously, Strong recalled how his vision of "the larger Christ" had transformed his

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[1] Ibid., pp. 267-69.

[2] Strong, "My Views of the Universe in General," The Baptist (May 29, 1920), 626.

theology of technicalities into a theology of life."[1] And in the preface to the final edition of the Systematic Theology he said:

> While I still hold to the old doctrines, I interpret them differently and expound them more clearly, because I seem to myself to have reached a fundamental truth which throws new light upon them all. This truth I have tried to set forth in my book entitled Christ in Creation.[2]

He earnestly hoped this "fundamental truth" could become a way of linking the old with the new and of healing the wounds of the present. In other words, Strong wanted to be both traditional and liberal, to raise an umbrella of progressive orthodoxy under which both the conservative and the radical might find shelter.[3] Such was the vision of his positive and expansive faith. But when the Systematic Theology appeared in 1907-09 it was scorned by the liberals, to whom it looked, because of its scholastic framework, like deadly dogmatism. The irony is that conservatives cherished the work from the first, for, back in 1894 when Strong first aired his ethical monism in that series of essays in the denominational press, conservative Baptist leaders fretted about the tendency of his thought and called him down for what they took to be incipient unitarianism, if not pantheism. The Journal and Messenger of Cincinnati later reported on the alignment in the controversy sparked by Strong's articles:

> At least one representative of each of our theological seminaries, except Hamilton, called in question the position of the author. Dr. [Elias H.] Johnson, of Crozer; Dr. [Alvah] Hovey, of Newton; Dr. [Galusha] Anderson, of Chicago; and Dr. [Franklin H.] Kerfoot, of Louisville, each took strong ground against the view presented. . . .

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[1]Strong, What Shall I Believe? (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1922), p. 92.

[2]Strong, Systematic Theology, p. vii.

[3]Cf. Christ in Creation, p. 207; What Shall I Believe?, p. 8; and The Record (June, 1908), 14.

> No one of the philosophers and theologians who have given attention to the essays has been able to agree with Dr. Strong.[1]

But by the time the first volume of the revised Systematic Theology appeared in 1907, many of the conservatives must have forgotten their grievances, while those who might have been disturbed by Strong's reference to his monism in the preface were probably disarmed by his accompanying warning that "we seem upon the verge of a second Unitarian defection."[2] Then, too, as one of his local associates later observed, "no one dared call the friend of Rockefeller and the interpreter of Tennyson a heretic."[3] So, aside from Newman, there were by 1907 very few inclined to express misgivings about Strong's thought.[4] It was not that Strong had won the day with the conservatives; he had not. Many remained as rigid as ever in their biblicism, preparing the way for the forthcoming fundamentalist struggle. Strong's attempt to mediate failed; he was ignored. As later reported, his ethical monism was "understood by few and accepted by none."[5] Even those who supposedly embraced his views disregarded what he deemed most

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[1] Journal and Messenger (March 26, 1896), 3. Articles challenging Strong's position appeared in various issues of The Examiner subsequent to his original articles of November, 1894, and October, 1895. No response came from Hamilton, where the dominant figure was liberal theologian William Newton Clarke. All of Strong's articles along with a lengthy critical review by Elias H. Johnson were published by The Examiner in booklet form in 1896. In his 1895 report to the seminary trustees Strong referred to the controversy and summarized his own views. Cf. Annual Report of the Union, 1895, pp. 31-32.

[2] Systematic Theology, p. ix.

[3] John Rothwell Slater, "Rochester Forty Years Ago," Rochester Historical Society, XX (1942), 26-27.

[4] Cf. Calvin Goodspeed's negative review in Review and Expositor, V (April, 1908), 242-53.

[5] Slater, "Rochester Forty Years Ago," Rochester Historical Society, XX (1942), 26.

important.[1] And all of this happened just as Strong, now an old man in spite of a remarkable vigor, was about to retire from his four decades of selfless endeavor as a theological educator, and just as the new generation, the liberal generation, was coming to power. Other things were happening, too, as we will later see. It is sufficient now to note that it was in this time of moving off the scene of action and, at the same time, of being misunderstood and ignored, that Strong passed into the third phase of his thought, the negative and defensive stage. To that we will return in chapter six.

Meanwhile, it is well to recognize that, in the classroom, where he was at his best, Strong's spirit of openness and honest inquiry, breadth as well as depth, was not lost on his better students--men like Ernest DeWitt Burton, Walter Rauschenbusch, Conrad Henry Moehlman, and others.[2] In an address given at Auburn Theological Seminary in 1899, Strong summed up what "the vision of the larger Christ" meant for his teaching:

> I confess that I now enjoy the teaching of theology, because theology includes everything in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Christ the revealer of God, has many activities. We no longer confine him to Palestine or think of him as narrowed down to the three and thirty years of his tabernacling in the flesh. He reveals God in nature. . . . The immanent God, in whom all things consist, and in whom humanity lives, moves, and has its being, is none other than Christ. He is the moving force of human history, and he alone makes all things work together for good. Beauty and

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[1]Carl F. H. Henry, who taught systematic theology from 1942 to 1946 at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, a school founded to counteract liberalizing tendencies, admits to "the elimination of the 'monistic concessions'" on the part of some who use Strong's work as a text. Cf. Personal Idealism and Strong's Theology, p. 228.

[2]Cf. Moehlman's very generous tribute, "Dr. Strong and His Teaching," RTS Bulletin (Strong Number, May, 1922), 52-57. See Strong's remarkable sermon at the ordination of E. D. Burton, Philosophy and Religion, pp. 324-29, in which this budding young biblical scholar, destined to be president of the University of Chicago, was admonished to recognize the duty as well as the right of private judgment.

> art in Greece, law and organization in Rome, constitutional monarchy in Britain, representative democracy in America, these are all parts of his educational process, as truly as was the development of man's ethical and religious nature among the Hebrews.[1]

Strong's theology was indeed revivified by his conception of the immanent Christ, but unfortunately he failed to demonstrate the change with major structural modifications in the final edition of the Systematic Theology.[2] Instead his thought was still encased in the rigid, scholastic framework of the original Lectures on Theology.

IV

In the latter years of the collective endeavor of the Big Five, when Strong came to the fullness of his powers, the expansive spirit of his progressive orthodoxy pervaded the atmosphere at Rochester. This does not mean, of course, that the members of the Big Five were all harmoniously playing the same tune--Strong's tune. They were not. And one grand soul who was sounding a different note was Old Testament professor and librarian Howard Osgood.[3] Son of a Louisiana plantation owner who felt morally obligated to escape the slaveholding ways of the Southern gentry by moving north, Osgood was himself a sort of Southern gentleman, mild in manner and given to hospitality. Admired for the wide range of his knowledge, he was the kind of scholar who was content to spend hours investigating some obscure point of history or philology. In his mature years he had become a Baptist because he was convinced by the available evidence

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[1]Strong, Miscellanies, I, p. 252.

[2]William Adams Brown made this point in his review of Strong's work. Cf. "Recent Treatises on Systematic Theology," American Journal of Theology, XII (January, 1908), 154-55.

[3]Biographical details are taken chiefly from The Record (May, 1912), pp. 24-25; and Moehlman, " Howard Osgood," in Dictionary of American Biography, XIV, pp. 79-80.

that immersion was indeed the original form of Christian baptism. Master of five languages and student of archaeology, he served for better than a quarter of a century as a valuable member of the American Company of Old Testament Revisers, the committee responsible for producing the American Standard Version of the Old Testament. Among textual critics and biblical translators his work was well recognized and widely respected, a prominence which he enjoyed despite his staunch opposition to the employment of the higher criticism in biblical studies.

In his own work at Rochester he neither avoided nor dismissed with a cavil the conclusions of the higher critics, choosing instead to meet their challenge head-on. This he did because, as he put it,

> no intelligent man would hinder the free exercise of the mind, for only by that can intelligence be continued and increased among men. . . . Liberty is the first requisite for truth, discovery, progress, as well as for the right preservation of what has previously been gained. The truth has nothing to fear from liberty.[1]

In Old Testament studies, the principal challenge of what Osgood called "anti-biblical criticism" was the documentary hypothesis of the origin of the Pentateuch. Throughout his long career at the seminary Osgood dealt with this challenge by taking each class through several months of Pentateuchal studies, in which he introduced the whole range of relevant recent and contemporary scholarship, all the while leading the students toward his own conclusion that

> historical criticism on the broadest lines, guided by the numerous monuments as interpreted by the most able investigators of the

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[1]Osgood, "The History and Definition of Higher Criticism," Bibliotheca Sacra, XLIV (October, 1892), 529-30. Osgood did hold, despite the above statement, that a man no longer in agreement "in certain fundamental views of the Bible" with the consensus of his group should preserve his own and the group's liberty by voluntarily removing himself. Cf. p. 530.

> present day, must place the composition of the Pentateuch contemporaneous with the events of the last four books, and must ascribe its composition to one master hand.[1]

Of course, with such an approach, not all of his students followed Osgood to his own conclusion, but some passed to wider liberty through doors which he held open.

Osgood's designation of his own work as "historical criticism" is not in keeping with the historical method as generally conceived by biblical scholars of the time. His successor and former student, Walter Betteridge, summarized Osgood's approach as follows:

> He made the Bible the center of all his studies and used archaeology not to correct or even to supplement the Bible but to throw light on the biblical teaching. He used to refuse to admit that his faith in any biblical statement was increased by archaeological confirmation. The biblical statement was true, must be true, but the archaeological fact was welcome because it often enabled one to understand the Bible better. . . . His final and conclusive proof of the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament books was the teaching of Jesus. He sought to settle the questions which arose by the simple appeal, 'What does the Savior say?'[2]

He held firmly, almost desperately, to the notion of biblical inerrancy and, therefore, regarded any questioning of the truthfulness of the text as not only a denial of inspiration but as basically anti-Christian.[3] Biblical literalist that he was, he did not avoid reading his own ideas back into the text, as may be seen, for instance, in the roundabout way he claimed to find a full-blown doctrine of resurrection in the Old Testament.[4] Osgood

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[1]Osgood, "A Reasonable Hypothesis of the Origin of the Pentateuch," in Essays on Pentateuchal Criticism, by Various Writers (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1888), p. 398.

[2]The Record (May, 1912), 25.

[3]Cf. Osgood, "The Inerrancy of the Scriptures," Proceedings of the Baptist Congress, 1892, pp. 86-92; passim.

[4]Cf. Osgood, "The Resurrection in the Pentateuch," Baptist Quarterly Review, X (1888), 425-36; and "Resurrection 3000-4000 B.C. and the Old Testament," Bibliotheca Sacra, LIX (July, 1902), 409-33.

was Rochester's version of a thoroughgoing biblicist, and his biblicism was certainly of a polished, erudite sort. He was a man of even temperament who did not relish controversy. Nevertheless, because of the strictness of his views, he was compelled throughout his career and even in retirement to engage steadily in polemics against the higher criticism.[1]

Whereas Strong had found it possible to adjust his views somewhat to the higher criticism, Osgood never did. He toiled hard and long against the new ideas, so that when he retired at the age of sixty-nine--the first of the Big Five to step aside--he felt the weight of his years. But undoubtedly, also, he labored beneath the burden of being the lone advocate at Rochester of what he deemed to be the truth as touching the scriptures. Others--his colleagues and friends among the local intelligentsia, but also his students--were less and less drawn to his ideas. Thus, already cut off in the realm of ideas, he began literally to sever his connections with the men of ideas. As his father before him had felt morally obligated to leave the midst of the slaveholders, so now he seemed obliged to withdraw

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[1]Before the Baptist Congress Osgood delivered major addresses on "Modern Biblical Criticism: Its History and Method," Proceedings of the Baptist Congress, 1883, pp. 56-60; and on "The Inerrancy of the Scriptures," ibid., 1892, pp. 86-92. In the Baptist Quarterly Review he had articles on "Jesus Christ and 'the Newer School of Criticism,'" V (1883), 88-117; and "Jesus Christ the Final Test of Biblical Criticism," IX (1887), 351-69. The following were published in Bibliotheca Sacra: "The History and Definition of Higher Criticism," XLIX (October, 1892), 529-45; "Old Wine in Fresh Wine Skins," L (July, 1893), 460-86; "If One Loves Me, He Will Keep My Word," LI (October, 1894), 674-95; "President Harper's Lectures," LII (April, 1895), 323-41; "Isaiah the Myth and Isaiah the Prophet," LVIII (January, 1901), 68-87; In The Bible Student he published "Christ in the Pentateuch," VI (1902), 83-90; and "Latest Results of the Destructive Criticism," VIII (1903), 273-82. He also contributed to several symposia: "A Reasonable Hypothesis of the Origin of the Pentateuch," in Essays on Pentateuchal Criticism (1888); "Jesus the Supreme Witness and Example of Inspiration," in The Inspired Word, ed. Arthur T. Pierson (New York: A. D. F. Randolph, 1888), pp. 240-55; "Learned Doubt and the Living Word," in Anti-Higher Criticism, or Testimony to the Infallibility of the Bible, ed. L. W. Munhall (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1894), pp. 13-25.

from the advocates of the "destructive" criticism. In 1898, two years before his retirement, he had resigned from the Pundit Club, to which he had belonged for twenty years. And now, in 1900, he laid down his teaching duties at the seminary, and in 1901 discontinued his service as librarian. From then until his death in 1911 he was, as later reported, "out of personal touch with our work."[1] He spent his remaining years very much in seclusion, occasionally taking another swipe at the higher critics. When Osgood died Walter Betteridge ventured the opinion that probably "his death removes the last great scholar who defends the older or traditional view of the authorship of the Old Testament books."[2] Whether that was true or not, it is certain that, once Osgood was gone, there was at Rochester no one left to defend those views.

Osgood's opposite in New Testament studies was William Arnold Stevens,[3] a man of broad culture and of quiet ways, yet possessed of a ready wit. A lover of poetry who preferred comparative seclusion to the marketplaces of life, Stevens cared nothing for popular applause and was never enslaved by conventionality. Still, he was highly esteemed by those who knew him. His father had been a missionary-educator on the Ohio frontier, and his mother was a woman of keen discernment and deep piety, qualities which she passed on to her son. Stevens attributed his religious awakening to the preaching of E. G. Robinson; later he was Robinson's student at Rochester. He improved his gift for linguistics through special studies at Harvard and in 1867-68 at Leipzig and Berlin, where he became well

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[1] The Record (May, 1912), 24.

[2] Ibid., p. 25.

[3] For biographical details see The Record (February, 1910), 1-12; and W. H. Allison, "William Arnold Stevens," in Dictionary of American Biography, XVII, pp. 627-28.

acquainted with the higher critical approach to the Bible. In 1877 he came to Rochester from Denison University, where he had been professor of Greek language and literature for several years.

At the close of his first year at Rochester, Stevens reported to the seminary trustees on his teaching as follows:

> I have not thought it chiefly desirable to present to the student a completed body of notes on certain passages or themes of New Testament study, but rather to familiarize him, in connection with the leading facts, with the principles and methods of the subjects treated. To grasp principles, to employ them methodically and habitually in the interpretation of the inspired page--personal training in this direction is what I have endeavored to keep chiefly in view.[1]

And in that first year he introduced beginning students to "the elementary facts of historical criticism." This preoccupation with principles and methodology characterized Stevens' teaching throughout his long career, as well as found expression in his writings.[2] As Strong observed, "he taught not so much his opinions as his method."[3]

In contrast to Osgood who acquainted his students with the higher criticism in order to expose its shortcomings, Stevens sought to demonstrate the application of the historical method in a positive manner. He was as concerned as Osgood to conserve the traditional Christian faith, but he did not therefore reject every new thing, and especially did he accept and employ the historical method. He insisted that

> if Protestant Christianity be true to itself and loyal to its principles, it must not disavow criticism, nor historical research in any form; it must not discourage any critic, whatever his name, who

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[1] Annual Report of the Union, 1878, pp. 35-36.

[2] Cf. Stevens, "Constructive Exegesis," Bibliotheca Sacra, XXXIX (April, 1882), 209-30; "Grammatical Exegesis," Old and New Testament Student, IX (October, 1889), 198-206.

[3] The Record (February, 1910), 4.

> is honestly applying methods that are really scientific in order to test the reality and determine the significance of scripture history.[1]

Stevens saw a vital connection between the Christian faith and history. Christianity was to him preeminently an historical religion.

> It was based not on ideas primarily but on history. Thus intelligent and pure Christianity must always keep one foot solidly on history. Hence the significance of the New Testament documents. The New Testament was to him substantially credible history.[2]

But this recorded history was not the record of just any history; it had to do with the history of redemption, the center of which was the redeemer. Stevens maintained that some such conception was basic for a proper Christian use of the historical method. As he put it, "the history that does not sit at the feet of revelation can never hope to interpret . . . the life of Christ at all." And he admitted that, from such a perspective, the historical merges into the theological.[3]

In 1900, just as Osgood was retiring from the seminary, Stevens made the following report of his work:

> The position taken in this department of the Rochester Seminary is, as it has been for more than twenty years, that we are not bound as Christian scholars to assume previous to investigation that the Bible is 'the word of God' in such a sense that it is of necessity accurately true in all matters of fact, or that every book of the Bible is what it purports on its face to be; rather, that we rightfully test the claims put forth by the Bible itself or by the Church for it by the methods of science and historical research.[4]

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[1]Stevens, Introduction to the New Testament (Rochester: 1900); quoted in RTS Bulletin (November, 1914), 9.

[2]The Record (February, 1910), 7.

[3]Stevens, "The Ministry of Christ," Biblical World, VI (December, 1895), 454.

[4]Quoted in RTS Bulletin (November, 1914), 9.

This approach was not lost on his students, who remembered him for the honesty and sincerity with which he faced every question. One of those students was Walter Rauschenbusch, who said:

> Without reserve I rank Dr. Stevens as one of the most influential teachers I have ever had. . . . He was content to be a teacher, and gave himself with whole-souled devotion to his classes and to his science. . . . He was my most frequent and trusted literary advisor.[1]

And then there was Ernest DeWitt Burton (1854-1925), who studied with Stevens at both Denison and Rochester and was for the year 1882-83 his colleague as instructor in Greek before leaving Rochester for Newton, from which finally he went on to the University of Chicago, where he crowned an enviable reputation as teacher and biblical scholar by becoming university president. Burton and Stevens became fast friends, and one product of that friendship was their Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study,[2] a volume that passed through twelve editions within nineteen years of its initial publication in 1893. This very useful work differed from earlier English harmonies in presenting the material of the gospels in a most straightforward manner, with no attempt to impose an artificial harmonization; problems of inconsistency were left where the gospels left them.[3] For Burton, Stevens the teacher had become Stevens the friend, co-laborer, and trusted advisor.[4] Like Osgood, Stevens was conservative, but unlike

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[1] The Record (February, 1910), 6.

[2] Cf. also their parallel work, An Outline Handbook of the Life of Christ From the Four Gospels (Boston: Silver, Burdett & Co., 1893).

[3] The work of Stevens and Burton was preceded by about six months by the Harmony of John A. Broadus, a volume which also broke with the traditional format.

[4] For Burton's evaluation of Stevens, cf. The Record (February, 1910), 2-3.

Osgood he imbibed deeply of the liberal attitude. In this regard he was more akin to President Strong, to whom through mutual ties of affection he was very close. When Stevens died in 1910, the last of the Big Five save one, Strong remarked: "For a third of a century he has been my chief counsellor and friend. It is hard to let him go."[1]

Among the Big Five, Osgood occupied the more conservative wing while Stevens, by virtue of the faithfulness with which he adhered to the historical method, held down the more liberal wing. Strong stood between, though much nearer to Stevens, and embraced them both within the range of his expansive thought. Completing the lineup of the Big Five were Professors T. Harwood Pattison and Benjamin Osgood True, who came simultaneously to Rochester in 1881 and there nurtured for two decades the David-Jonathan friendship they had begun half-a-dozen years earlier while ministering to neighboring churches in Connecticut.[2] Englishman Pattison was a genial soul, versatile in mind and bouyant in spirit, a brilliant preacher. His adult years were about evenly divided between preaching in the churches and teaching preaching in the seminary. He favored a Bible-centered religious life both for the individual and for the church and looked upon preaching as related to the Bible like the shoot to its root. But seemingly he never frankly faced the knotty problem of just how to keep the Bible in the place of centrality and authority in the face of the challenge of the scientific age.[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

[2] On Pattison and True, see Carman, "A Great Theological Quintet," The Record (May, 1912), 26; and The Baptist Encyclopedia, ed. William Cathcart (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), II, pp. 888, 1170.

[3] The substance of Pattison's lectures at Rochester is contained in the following volues, all published by the American Baptist Publication Society at Philadelphia: The History of the English Bible (1894); The Making of the Sermon (1898); Public Worship (1900); The Ministry of the

In other words, the religious practice that he was promoting was based on a theoretical foundation the sturdiness of which was more and more being called into question by his contemporaries. Nevertheless, in his chosen field he was something of an artist, and it was as a craftsman that he most influenced his students. When he died in 1904 Strong recalled that "he taught homiletics by example as well as by precept."[1]

Pattison's close friend, B. O. True, was more like Stevens in the habit of his mind. He was serious, earnest, and omnivorous reader, with a talent for orderly arrangement of vast reaches of data—qualities not to be despised in his chosen field of church history. He enjoyed associations in the Pundit Club for seventeen years. He was abreast of what was going on in the wide world of Christian scholarship, and seemingly regarded it as his particular duty to remind the seminary trustees from time to time of the extent of the changes in the understanding of the Christian faith that had occurred as a result of the scientific application of the historical method. And he did not hesitate to say that at Rochester he did not feel free to pursue first-line historical inquiry, because of the limitations of a static curriculum and the lack of proper facilities.[2] Implicitly he criticized the administration of President Strong in 1896 when he compared in print what the seminary was to what it might have been had Robinson remained at the helm.[3] So, Professor True labored away, never

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Sunday School (1902); The History of Christian Preaching (1903); and For the Work of the Ministry: For the Classroom, The Study, and the Street, ed. Harold Pattison (1907).

[1] Annual Report of the Union, 1904, p. 39.

[2] Cf. Annual Report of the Union, 1889, pp. 34-35; and ibid., 1901, pp. 34-35.

[3] True, "As a Leader in Post-Graduate Study," in Ezekiel Gilman Robinson, pp. 249-50.

quite satisfied that the seminary provided the best atmosphere for his best work. His unrest was not, however, that of a radical seeking freedom of movement, but of a conservative who wanted to make full use of the most advanced techniques of his day. This is demonstrated, for instance, in his study of the "Testimony of the Second Century to Writers and Writings of the New Testament,"[1] in which, through a careful marshaling of the evidence, he gave undergirding to the traditional view of the authentic apostolic character of the New Testament books. In the process of doing this he deliberately counteracted both the radical higher critics with their negative conclusions and the moralizers who regarded critical questions with indifference or disdain. Professor True apparently realized that his own work, work of a deliberately conservative and traditional sort, would best flourish in a climate that provided freedom also to the harbinger of change.

These, then, were the Big Five--Strong, Osgood, Stevens, Pattison, and True--a remarkable quintet privileged to work together for the better part of a quarter of a century. The dominant figure was Strong, and within the expanses of the thought of his most progressive period there was ample room for all the rest. Of the five, Osgood was the most rigid in his conservatism, but he was not therefore more orthodox than the others, save perhaps in his own eyes. All of the Big Five were eminently conservative, though some--notably Strong, Stevens, and True--partook considerably of the liberal spirit. The days of the Big Five were days of the challenge of the scientific age. Those who imbibed the liberal spirit sought positive ways of meeting the challenge, while Osgood responded to the challenge

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[1] Baptist Quarterly Review, XIV (1892), 257-86.

in a negative manner--categorically so. And Pattison seemed content either to build on an old, perhaps outmoded foundation, or else to let someone else do the basic work for him. When the liberal generation came--Strong's third faculty--they were ready to work on the foundations of theology, but perhaps in ways with which Pattison could not take pleasure. But Pattison was no longer young, and he would soon be off the scene. So it was with the Big Five: Osgood stepped aside; True, Pattison, and Stevens died; only Strong was left. And the liberals came.

CHAPTER III

A. H. STRONG AND HIS COLLEAGUES: THE LIBERAL GENERATION

With the passing of the Big Five, Strong brought to Rochester his third faculty, the liberal generation--Walter Betteridge, Walter Rauschenbusch, J. W. A. Stewart, Cornelius Woelfkin, and Conrad Henry Moehlman. As liberals, some of these were not so much brought to Rochester, however, as bred there. Certainly this was true of the first of the new generation.

I

Walter Betteridge[1] was a product of both the University of Rochester and the Rochester Seminary. When he graduated from the latter in 1891, he was invited, on the basis of his superior linguistic ability and at Osgood's request, to remain as instructor in Hebrew. A year later he was advanced to an assistant professorship in Old Testament, which he held until he succeeded Osgood at the latter's retirement. So, he was Osgood's student, then colleague, and finally successor. Not unlike Osgood in the quiet, unobtrusive manner with which he pursued his work, he was very unlike Osgood in his receptivity to new ideas, particularly biblical criticism.

It was later reported that in that first year "when it became clear that the younger man was turning toward the new methods," Osgood "opposed his appointment to a permanent position."[2] But the appointment was not

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[1]For biographical details, cf. RTS Bulletin (May, 1916), 3-22.

[2]W. Rauschenbusch, in ibid., p. 19.

withheld and the two men, representing fundamentally opposite points of view, labored together side by side in the same department for nine years. Recalling this Walter Rauschenbusch related:

> Both were Christian men, standing for the highest things they knew, loyal to the word of God which had been given them. Both were constrained to work out the logic of their views, and to develop the historical heritage of truth which each received from his own age and generation. . . . Here was a call for patient courage, for humble self-assertion, for tenacious loyalty to conviction on the part of the slender and diffident young assistant professor. Only those who have gone through that kind of a mill can judge how it racks every muscle and tests our moral qualities.[1]

It is interesting that the collective labor of the Big Five was first supplemented in the area of Old Testament studies. In the light of Betteridge's permanent appointment over the opposition of Osgood, it is very likely that President Strong was purposefully injecting new blood just here in order to bring the work in this department into closer conformity with the newer approach that was otherwise coming more and more to dominate the other offerings of the seminary. Alongside his predecessor, Betteridge might appear quite liberal, yet he was possessed of that same cautious spirit and judicious conservatism that marked the work of Strong and Stevens.

On the controversial question of the origin and composition of the Pentateuch, Betteridge was confident that "the documentary theory . . . is the most satisfactory explanation of the literary and historical phenomena." In support of this view he referred his reader to Strong's treatment of the problem in the Systematic Theology.[2] Another difficult issue raised very pointedly by critical studies of the Old Testament was the question of

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[1] Ibid., p. 20.

[2] Betteridge, Exodus (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1914), p. vi; cf. pp. v-x, and The Book of Deuteronomy (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1915), pp. vii-xii.

the continuing usefulness for Christians of large portions of the Hebrew Scriptures which were ethically offensive to modern man. It was not uncommon for Christians to look upon the Old Testament as representative of an outdated and outmoded stage in the evolution of the religious sensitivities of the race. Betteridge was alert to such difficulties, but he was not, therefore, ready to give up the Christian use of the Old Testament. For example, in an address before the Baptist Congress in 1905 he acknowledged the "moral shortcomings" of the Old Testament, even affirming that "from the point of view both of precept and of principle, its morality must be admitted to be in part, at least, outgrown and superseded." But, he insisted the Old Testament still clearly sets forth the fundamental principles of the supremacy of the moral law and the primacy of God's moral order.[1] Perhaps this concern over "moral shortcomings" in the Old Testament indicates that Betteridge was not yet wholly free from the notion that the very propositions of the Bible somehow in and of themselves are morally binding. Betteridge also recognized that "the devotional use of the Old Testament is a problem." He told Walter Rauschenbusch in a letter that he hoped the latter could make such use of the Old Testament for his children and "at the same time keep them free from the older ideas of the Bible which they must later change, perhaps with . . . mental and spiritual anguish, as some of us know."[2]

In 1908 one fearful student, who came to Rochester expecting to find liberalism and knew just where to look for it, wrote a former teacher:

> Only one thing so far I have found to which I would find serious objection, but there is no telling how much mischief that will

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[1]Betteridge, "What Is the Ethical Value of the Old Testament in Modern Life?," Proceedings of the Baptist Congress, 1905, p. 11.

[2]Letter of Betteridge to Rauschenbusch, July 28, 1913.

> signify in the end. That is right where I am sure you would expect to find it, in the Old Testament. . . . Dr. Betteridge . . . does not hesitate to say that he considers parts of the Old Testament as legendary and historically unreliable. He says that for him it has more religious value than before he made the discovery.[1]

That this student himself later came to essentially the same views does not minimize the extent of his initial disturbance over confronting such ideas firsthand. Betteridge certainly did not adopt new ideas merely for their novelty. In 1897 in a review article he impugned "enthusiasts who would compel the adoption of the recent critical theories by the sheer weight of the authority of modern scholarship."[2] And the following year he reminded fellow scholars that "scientific method demands that the theory shall be the outgrowth and explanation of the data and forbids the selection of the data to suit the theory."[3] These two statements characterized his own approach.

Conrad Henry Moehlman, who was both student and colleague of Betteridge, remembered him as

> a persevering and thoroughgoing investigator. . . . His passion was to 'deal with things as they are.' . . . His study was not provincial. He kept up to date. . . . In his desire to be fair, honest and truthful, he often hesitated to decide a debated question. Occasionally he would say that a teacher of Old Testament might become quite popular if the data would only permit him to treat open questions as closed. His modesty was permanent.[4]

Betteridge died in 1916 when he was but fifty-two, his years cut short by hard work. His published legacy to subsequent generations was necessarily limited by his years of tireless extracurricular service to the seminary

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[1]Letter of W. T. Conner to B. H. Carroll, September, 1908; quoted in Stewart A. Newman, W. T. Conner, Theologian of the Southwest (Nashville: Broadman, 1964), p. 90.

[2]American Journal of Theology, II (January, 1897), 142.

[3]Ibid., III (April, 1898), 412. [4]RTS Bulletin (May, 1916), 11.

library, which he had transformed into a solid, well-ordered collection. At his death Strong said of him in a letter:

> He was not only accurate but critical, not only critical but receptive, not only receptive but retentive. Fairmindedness was a sort of passion with him; what he believed as the result of inquiry he could stand for. I came early to think that in Old Testament teaching I could have no more discreet and trustworthy assistant than he. . . . Sensitive in the extreme, he was never censorious or bitter toward those who could not agree with him. . . . The liberal and the conservative were united in him by reason of his loving spirit.[1]

Betteridge adopted the higher critical approach in his work, but this was not unknown at Rochester before his time. What happened, however, is that Betteridge joined with Stevens, so that together "they enthroned scientific research at Rochester," even in the face of "much vociferous opposition, with some professors wavering, some becoming reactionary."[2] Thus, Betteridge, the first of the new generation, in his critical approach to Old Testament studies at Rochester, did not so much introduce a new element at the school as steadily establish the direction of the thought-flow in channels already being cut by some of the Big Five. In fact, it might be said that Betteridge helped draw the Big Five closer together in purposive effort in their final years, years which not incidentally happened also to be the ones of Strong's greatest creativity. But this drawing together and determination of the principal method and chief direction of thought of the Big Five caught one man out of step and quickly left him further and further behind. This, of course, was Howard Osgood, who at his retirement in 1900 must have been singularly dejected, convinced that the seminary had turned aside from the cause of truth and righteousness.

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[1]Letter of Strong to C. A. Barbour, March 3, 1916; printed in ibid., p. 6.

[2]Moehlman, in ibid., p. 11.

II

Osgood figured strangely also in the career of the next of the liberals, Walter Rauschenbusch,[1] the man whom Reinhold Niebuhr was to call "not only the real founder of social Christianity in this country but also its most brilliant and generally satisfying exponent."[2] Walter Rauschenbusch, seventh in a direct line of succession of Christian ministers, was, as we have seen, born in Rochester, the son of Professor Augustus Rauschenbusch of the German Department of the Rochester Seminary. From the wellsprings of his father's Americanized Lutheran pietism young Walter drank deeply, and what he drank he early enriched from the streams of Ritschlian and Schleiermacherian thought encountered during four years study and travel in Europe, 1879 to 1883. After returning home and graduating in turn from the University of Rochester and the seminary, he hoped in 1886 to receive missionary appointment from the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society; but, because the soundness of his faith was doubted by Professor Osgood, he was rejected.[3] This happened five years before Osgood unwittingly opened the door for the permanent employ at the seminary of his liberal successor, Walter Betteridge. With Rauschenbusch, as with Betteridge, Osgood's attempt to keep the Baptist world reserved for his own rigid orthodoxy met with eventual frustration. One can only imagine how much it must have disturbed

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[1]For biographical details see Dores Robinson Sharpe, Walter Rauschenbusch (New York: Macmillan, 1942); RTS Bulletin (Rauschenbusch Number; November, 1918); and CRDS Bulletin, I (October, 1928), 32-43.

[2]Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (New York: Harper, 1935), preface.

[3]Cf. Sharpe, Rauschenbusch, p. 58; and Moehlman, "The Life and Writings of Walter Rauschenbusch," CRDS Bulletin I (October, 1928), 33.

Osgood in his latter days when the man whom he had once effectively shut off from a missionary vocation was invited to return to the seminary faculty. And Rauschenbusch did not return to teach until he was publicly confirmed in the liberalism that Osgood suspected.

At his graduation from the seminary young Rauschenbusch went directly to New York City's West Side as pastor of the small Second German Baptist Church, located not far from the rough Hell's Kitchen tenement section. While ministering to the people of the area, he himself fell ill one winter and suffered an almost total loss of hearing that plagued him for the remainder of his days, blunting his natural gregariousness and plunging him into the loneliness of the silent world. There in the West Side, where he remained as pastor from 1886 to 1897, he discovered poverty. As he later recalled, his social view "did not come from the church. It came from outside. It came through personal contact with poverty."[1] In his first months in New York City he was awakened to the broader dimensions of social problems through "the agitation of Henry George,"[2] exponent of the single-tax and author of Progress and Poverty (1879), then reform candidate for the mayoralty of the city. Rauschenbusch began to read avidly the works of leading advocates of social and economic reform.[3] Life in Hell's Kitchen turned him to the social scientists, and, in the exigencies of applying their concepts to his ministry, he turned to the Scriptures for confirmation

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[1]Quoted in Sharpe, Rauschenbusch, pp. 428-29; cf. RTS Bulletin (Rauschenbusch Number; November, 1918), 51.

[2]Rauschenbusch, Christianising the Social Order (New York: Macmillan, 1912), p. 394.

[3]Cf. Sharpe, Rauschenbusch, pp. 64-65, 197.

of his budding social concern.[1] The pages of the Bible, particularly the Gospels, seemed now to open before him new and enlarged meanings previously hidden to his view. He now saw that the old gospel was a social gospel, and in light of this grand new vision he made a decision which determined the course of his subsequent life. In a Y.W.C.A. address in 1915, he reported this decision in the following words:

> When I was a young man of twenty, the thought began to hold mastery over my mind that I must live over again the life of Jesus, and if necessary die over again his death in some way. . . . That purpose gave my life its fundamental direction. When I began to have some insight into the social questions, and to relize how deeply the teachings of Jesus differed from the teachings ordinarily accepted in the Church, I dedicated myself to the task of re-establishing the teachings of Jesus Christ in the common thought of the Church, and of establishing his precepts as the common principles of the social world.[2]

Thus the die was cast and young Rauschenbusch, with the deepest sort of religious commitment, set out upon the rock-strewn path of the prophetic ministry. Thus early he sought and found in the New Testament the basis for his own social view, which was an adaption of Henry George's moderate socialism. Yet, he was not doctrinaire about the New Testament; he was careful to point out that

> Jesus did not teach political or social doctrines as such. . . . He has nothing to say on capitalism, but a lot on justice and covetousness; nothing on socialism, but a great deal about honest work, and doing your share and not eating up your fellow man, and not using force and violence.[3]

Rauschenbusch had initially gone to New York City intending to labor in the convantional evangelical manner for the saving of individual souls. It was this that he had in mind when he remarked regarding the

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[1]Cf. RTS Bulletin (Rauschenbusch Number; November, 1918), 51-52.

[2]Ibid., p. 54. [3]Ibid., pp. 54-55.

dawn of his social consciousness: "I had to set myself against all that I had previously been taught."[1] But, though he went through the pain of learning much that he had not previously been taught, he did not therefore unlearn the old lessons of individual responsibility and individual redemption. In an address in 1900 he told his hearers:

> There are two objects of salvation, the race and the individual. If we insist that saving the individual does not save the common life, let us remember that saving the common life does not save the individual either.[2]

In other words, the social gospel was for him never only social. This note was persistently sounded by Rauschenbusch, from his earliest public statements[3] right through to his last published work.[4] He sought without ceasing to strike a balance between individual and corporate redemption, insisting that the two were complementary, that the church "must begin at both ends simultaneously."[5] The changed individual would affect society, and the altered society would react favorably upon the individual.

Rauschenbusch turned, as we observed, to the Bible for the undergirding of his social views, and when he did he "discovered" that which became the keystone for all his subsequent thought, the concept of the Kingdom of God. As early as 1892 he was proclaiming openly and zealously that "the whole aim of Christ is embraced in the words 'the Kingdom of

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[1] Ibid., pp. 51-52.

[2] Rauschenbusch, "Religion the Life of God in the Soul of Man," paper read at the New York Conference on Religion, November 20, 1900, p. 2.

[3] E.g., "On Monopolies," Proceedings of the Baptist Congress, 1889, pp. 55-61.

[4] A Theology for the Social Gospel (New York: Macmillan, 1917), chap. 10.

[5] Christianizing the Social Order, p. 459; cf. pp. 458-64.

God.'"[1] And later he recalled that

> Christ's conception of the Kingdom of God came to me as a new revelation. Here was the idea and purpose that had dominated the mind of the Master himself. All his teachings center about it. His life was given to it. His death was suffered for it. When a man has once seen that in the Gospels, he can never unsee it again.[2]

And in the year before his death he set it down that

> to those who live in the social gospel, the Kingdom of God is a dear truth, the marrow of the gospel, just as the incarnation was to Athanasius, justification by faith alone to Luther, and the sovereignty of God to Jonathan Edwards.[3]

In 1894, in what amounted to an early programmatic statement of his thought, Rauschenbusch distinguished five different senses in which the term "Kingdom of God" was used: of heaven; in the mystical sense of the inner life of the Spirit; of the church; of the millennial reign of Christ; and of Christian social service. He concluded that none of these usages is wholly correct, but that

> the Kingdom of God is larger than anything contained in any one of these ideas. It stands for the sum of all divine and righteous forces on earth. It embraces all pure aspirations God-ward, and all true hopes for the perfection of life.[4]

He then set out his own understanding of the Kingdom as a synthesis combining elements of all the five conceptions previously mentioned:

> 1. In the common conception of the Kingdom of heaven, we must recognize the truth that we have no abiding city. . . . An ideal which is to satisfy all the desires of the human heart and is to embrace perfect man as well as the perfect Man, must include a heaven beyond death.
> 2. In the mystical conception of the Kingdom as the inward

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[1]"The Pulpit in Relation to Political and Social Reform," Proceedings of the Baptist Congress, 1892, p. 127.

[2]Christianizing the Social Order, p. 93.

[3]A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 131.

[4]"The Kingdom of God," The Kingdom, I (August, 1907), 1. This article originally appeared in The City Vigilant (May, 1894).

> fellowship with God, we must recognize the justice of human yearning for the living God. . . . Deeper than the hunger and thirst for the justice of God lies the hunger and thirst for God himself.
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> 3. We must recognize the importance of a living Church within the Kingdom. It must not dwindle. It is the channel through which ethical impulses pour unto humanity from God. Yet the Church and the Kingdom are not identical. We are the Church as we worship together; we are the Kingdom as we live justly and lovingly with one another.
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> 4. We must recognize the justice of the millennial hopes. They stand for the force of cataclysms in human history; for the direct interference of God in the life of nations; and the ultimate victory of right and love in the conflict of the ages.
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> 5. But finally, we must insist that the Kingdom is not only heaven, but is to come on earth; that while it begins in the depths of the heart, it is not to stay there; that the Church does not embrace all the forces of the Kingdom and is but a means for the advancement of the Kingdom; that while the perfection of the Kingdom may be reserved for a future epoch, the Kingdom is here and at work. The Kingdom means individual men and women, who freely do the will of God because they love it; who have fellowship with God, and who therefore live rightly with their fellowmen. . . . But the Kingdom also means a growing perfection in the collective life of humanity, in our laws, in the customs of society, in the institutions for education, and for the administration of mercy; in our public opinion, our literary and artistic ideals, in the pervasiveness of the sense of duty, and in our readiness to give our life as a ransom for others. With most social reformers it is the former aspect which needs emphasis; with most religious people, it is the latter.[1]

This inclusive understanding of the Kingdom of God became the central motif for all Rauschenbusch's public work. His major effort was, of course, expended in behalf of the Kingdom of God in the world, the fifth of the conceptions he listed. He prayed, "Thy Kingdom come," and worked toward that end. During his years in New York City he became known as a spokesman for the downtrodden and the dispossessed, the uprooted and the outcast. He demonstrated his care in his pastoral work and enlarged the field of his influence via platform and press. Through the late 'eighties and the 'nineties he was an active participant in the Baptist Congress, and in its deliberations voiced boldly and persuasively his passion for

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[1] Ibid., p. 3.

social justice. He was Congress secretary for three years, 1892 to 1894. From 1887, when he wrote his first paper on the social question, he contributed often to denominational publications as well as the local daily press, all the while developing his admirable and engaging literary style and sharpening his technique for pungent social criticism. He was one of the editors of For the Right, short-lived (1889-1891) but effective monthly organ of Christian social reform, dedicated to the working-people of New York City.[1] By 1896 he was moving beyond popular journalism to make contributions to learned journals.[2]

Rauschenbusch early stood for justice in the nation, especially in the cities; there was no mistaking that. In 1896 he identified himself quite as unambiguously as an advocate of justice in the halls of learning. Professor Nathaniel Schmidt (1862-1939) of the theological faculty of Colgate University had been summarily dismissed for his application of the higher critical method in biblical study. Rauschenbusch circularized the Baptist leadership of New York State in behalf of his abused friend and brother Baptist. In his lengthy protest letter, to which he invited others to affix their signatures, he despised the release of Schmidt by Baptists who boast of having no heresy trials; he compared the denomination to a community that "has no expense through the maintenance of law courts, because all cases are settled by lynch-law." Then he reminded his fellow Baptists:

> We have no authoritative creeds to which we pledge the teachers of our churches. We have never put the future under bond to the past. In taking the Bible only as our standard, we have taken as

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[1] On his early literary work, see Sharpe, Rauschenbusch, chap. 6.

[2] Two articles were published in early issues of the newly established American Journal of Sociology: "The Ideals of Social Reformers," II (September, 1896), 202-19; and "The Stake of the Church in the Social Movement," III (July, 1897), 18-30.

> a standard the record of very manifold and often divergent experiences of God's grace and truth, the record of a continuous and progressive unfolding of the truth; thus the very nature of our acknowledged standard pledges us to a large tolerance and to the maintenance of the spirit of inquiry. To demand that our ablest and most trusted teachers shall not go beyond the results of the past, is to darken the windows through which God may be preparing to shed the richer light of the coming days. To limit the intellectual field of our leaders to what is already approved by the mass of men, is to condemn our denomination to stagnation.
>
> Whether we accept or reject particular results of critical investigation, we assert the right of competent men to investigate and communicate their results, provided they do both in the spirit of reverence and of submission to the spirit of truth. We recognize that there are dangers connected with this right, but these dangers are inseparable from any stage of transition for the individual or the church, and Baptists . . . have forever avowed that they prefer the dangers of liberty with the living God to guide them, to the dangers of intellectual suppression and servility to the past.
>
> Even if some of us do not belong to it ourselves, we assert the right of a liberal wing of the Baptist denomination to exist and to contribute its share to our development. We assert that the critical investigation of the Bible is the proper function for a theological professor, if exercised with wisdom and spiritual insight, and without such wisdom and insight the most conservative attitude may be just as deleterious as the most radical.
>
> We should feel that our entire denomination would be involved in guilt if this action were suffered to pass without protest. . . . To all who differ from us we give notice that we also are Baptists and that while we freely yield to the most conservative of our brethren their abundant opportunities for the assertion of their views, we shall vindicate an equal right to ourselves.[1]

Thus unequivocally did Rauschenbusch strike a blow for academic freedom in the theological schools of the denomination.

Earlier we observed something of the importance of the Pundit Club and the Baptist Congress for the dissemination of fresh insights. For Walter Rauschenbusch the threshing-floor for new ideas was the Brotherhood of the Kingdom, which he and a handful of comrades[2] founded in 1892 for

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[1]Quoted in Sharpe, Rauschenbusch, pp. 106-07.

[2]The initial group which developed into the Brotherhood of the Kingdom was called the Society of Jesus. Rauschenbusch, Leighton Williams, and Nathaniel Schmidt were the three original members. At the time they were all young Baptist ministers in New York City. When the Brotherhood

the specific purpose of mutual study and frank discussion of Christian responsibility in social issues.[1] "We dare to hope," professed the members in 1895, "that with the good favor of our God we may become a kind of organized conscience, and that as days go by the voice of our Brotherhood may bear the accents of the Holy Ghost."[2] The Brotherhood was never a large movement, and its work was done quietly and without fanfare, but it was immensely influential. Within this close-knit fellowship the thinking of Rauschenbusch was developed and clarified. Here he gave and received, so much so that "it is difficult to say to what extent he shaped the thinking of the Brotherhood, and to what extent his thinking was shaped by the Brotherhood."[3] When in the course of time Rauschanbusch became the leading prophet of the social gospel, he was but the mouthpiece of the Brotherhood of the Kingdom, articulating ideas that had there taken shape over a decade-and-a-half of free exchange. In August of 1909 he wrote in the Visitor's Book of the Brotherhood: "May it do for others in the future what it did for me in the past."

This, then, is the man who was brought back to Rochester in 1897 to teach in the German Department and who was elected in 1902 to succeed Professor True in church history. Rauschenbusch was True's choice as well

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itself was founded, it consisted, besides these three, of two Philadelphia pastors, Samuel Zane Batten and George Dana Boardman, and Professor William Newton Clarke of the Hamilton Seminary. Each of these men exercised considerable influence in the propagation of liberal and social gospel ideas. Though the founders were all Baptists the Brotherhood was interdenominational in scope.

[1]The most authoritative study of the movement is Charles Howard Hopkins, "Rauschenbusch and the Brotherhood of the Kingdom," Church History VII (June, 1938), 138-56. Cf. Sharpe, Rauschenbusch, chap. 7.

[2]S. Z. Batten, "The Brotherhood of the Kingdom," The Kingdom (July 19, 1895), 3.

[3]W. S. Hudson, "Walter Rauschenbusch and the New Evangelism," Religion in Life, XXX (Summer, 1961), 416.

as Strong's. If at the time of his appointment he was not yet acknowledged as the foremost leader of the social gospel in America, it was not because he had been silent. Already he had sounded that not uncertain note which became the keynote of his career. Already he had committed himself to the social cause, had proclaimed the doctrine of the Kingdom, had championed the oppressed, had castigated the money powers, and had advocated academic freedom. And behind his criticism of the economic and religious and social status quo was an obvious acceptance of biblical criticism and the philosophy of evolution. All of this was certainly as plain to A. H. Strong as to any one else when Rauschenbusch was added to the Rochester faculty. His biographer reports that, at the time of his transfer to the chair of church history, "Strong suggested that church history, next to systematic theology, offered the best chance to bring in anything under the sun, and in enumerating what might be brought in, mentioned sociology."[1] At this time some theological schools in America were incorporating sociology into their curricula, and probably Rauschenbusch desired to introduce the subject at Rochester. He had studied sociology in Germany in 1891-92, but he was never to teach the subject at Rochester, probably because, as was then rather generally believed, some of the trustees feared he might prove too radical in that field.[2] He did, however, give a series of lectures on sociology at the seminary one year--at Strong's invitation. But far more important than this demonstrable interest in sociology was Strong's emphatic assurance to Rauschenbusch that, once on the faculty, he would have full freedom in his own department. Strong asked only two things: that

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[1]Sharpe, Rauschenbusch, pp. 155-56.

[2]Interview with Arthur L. Stewart and Harold Stewart, January 23, 1964.

Rauschenbusch take care to make things clear to the students so they would not go away with false notions, and that he maintain good rapport with the pastors of the churches.[1]

In Rochester Rauschenbusch arduously engaged himself in the task of social redemption on a very broad front, much as he had done during his pastoral days in New York City. He founded a local chapter of the Brotherhood of the Kingdom which became a significant means of developing a social concern among the church leaders of the city. He was a frequent speaker before the Labor Lyceum, where he pointedly indicted the local labor leaders for their Marxist radicalism, and urged the working-people to unite for "practical socialism."[2] He chaired a Y.M.C.A. committee that made a thorough survey of regional social conditions in 1904. Early local ecumenical endeavors received his full support. He joined with two area pastors in sponsoring "The People's Sunday Evening," which from its origin in 1908 to its disbanding in 1916 was

> the largest single factor in the social awakening of the Rochester public. . . . Leading thinkers of the city, state and nation, presented from a neutral platform, the various aspects of the questions of the day from a religious point of view. Free, open discussions at meetings, plus the publication of widely differing opinions in the press, stimulated and guided the judgments of all classes. . . . Tolerance, that rarest of virtues in American communities, was nourished.[3]

In regard to social concerns, between the century's dawn and 1917, when the United States entered the World War, the Rochester churches underwent

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[1]Cf. Sharpe, Rauschenbusch, p. 156.

[2]Sharpe prints most of the text of an unpublished address on this theme delivered before the Labor Lyceum, February 24, 1901. Cf. Rauschenbusch, pp. 203-16.

[3]Orlo J. Price, "One-Hundred Years of Protestantism in Rochester," Rochester Historical Society, XII (1933), 351.

a shift "in point of view, which gradually called for changes in method and emphasis."[1] Indicative of the changed attitude in the churches was the vote by the Ministerial Association in 1916 not to invite Billy Sunday to bring his "muscular" campaign against sin to Rochester. The city of Finney's triumphs was now ready to proclaim the gospel in other ways. It is interesting, also, that at about this time a Rochester pastor was dismissed from his church, the only complaint against him being his failure to preach the social gospel. Thus, by about the middle of the second decade of the twentieth century the social gospel in some form and in differing degrees had generally come to prevail in the churches of Rochester. This is not, of course, to say that the work of the social gospel was really complete or fully effective either in the churches or in the city at large, a fact which no one realized more clearly than Walter Rauschenbusch.[2]

The Rochester years, the most productive for Rauschenbusch, saw the publication of his three major works. The first of these, Christianity and the Social Crisis (1907), was a critique of the social status quo. He directed a two-pronged criticism at the whole socio-economic system and at the church, which had "substituted itself for the Kingdom of God, and thereby put the advancement of a tangible and very human organization in the place of the moral uplifting of humanity."[3] He maintained that finally "for the first time in religious history" there was now a real possibility

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[1] Ibid., p. 360.

[2] For details on church life in Rochester in this period, with particular emphasis on the developing social consciousness and the contribution of Rauschenbusch, cf. ibid., pp. 342-61; Blake McKelvey, "Walter Rauschenbusch's Rochester," ibid., XIV (October, 1952), 1-27; and McKelvey, Rochester: The Quest for Quality, 1890-1925 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 114-44.

[3] Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis (New York: Macmillan, 1907), p. 181.

for "a comprehensive and continuous reconstruction of social life in the name of God."[1] But he was not, like many of his contemporaries, naively optimistic. "The continents are strewn," he said,

> with the ruins of dead nations and civilizations. History laughs at the optimistic illusion that 'nothing can stand in the way of human progess.' It would be safer to assert that progress, is always for a time only, and then succumbs to the inevitable decay.[2]

He insisted that "in asking for faith in the possibility of a new social order, we ask for no Utopian delusion. We know well that there is no perfection for man in this life: there is only growth toward perfection." Still, he avowed, "we make it a duty to seek what is unattainable." This is the "paradox in the perfectibility of society," which has its counterpart in the quest for individual perfection. He did not forget the eschatological dimension of his central doctrine: "The Kingdom of God is always but coming," he said, adding, "but every approximation to it is worth while."[3]

This was the message of Rauschenbusch's first major work. He had regarded it as "a dangerous book" and had entered upon its writing with "fear and trembling" expecting "a good deal of anger and resentment." In 1907 he placed the completed manuscript in the hands of the publishers and set sail for a year's sabbatical study in Europe, hoping to avoid the heat of expected controversy. To his great surprise the book received immediate and widespread commendation, winning for the author sudden fame; he returned home to find himself acclaimed the leading American prophet of the social gospel. From the moment when he stepped off the ship and was asked to give a lecture at the Hotel Astor in New York City, life was never

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[1] Ibid., p. 209.

[2] Ibid., p. 279.

[3] Ibid., pp. 420-21.

again to be the same for him. He found himself "swamped with work," with "demands for lectures . . . coming in often." Yet he was modest about the book that had brought him fame, claiming that it "came out at a psychological moment" and was simply "an expression of what thousands were feeling."[1] Modest or not, his statement is probably a correct analysis of the situation, and the remark in a way indicates something of the nature of the prophetic function. The true prophet is a seer, one who sees, one who articulates clearly what others sense only dimly. For his time Walter Rauschenbusch was a prophet.

His first major volume was his social critique; the next was his program for reconstruction, which he called Christianizing the Social Order (1912). By now his name was inseparably linked to the social gospel, so that his agenda for reform was gladly received. The reviews were generally positive, even enthusiastic, and almost without exception the work was hailed as of greater significance and destined to have a more lasting effect than his earlier Christianity and the Social Crisis.[2] But this later volume seems at mid-twentieth century much less satisfactory than the earlier work, and probably now appears defective for the very reasons for which it was originally praised as a magnificent achievement. For, of all of Rauschenbusch's works, this is the one most in tune with his times, particularly with regard to the extent of his seeming intoxication with the heady wine of optimism. It would not be quite accurate to call his a foolish optimism, for he cautions his reader to take care not to expect too much, since "even a Christian social order cannot mean perfection."[3]

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[1]"The Genesis of 'Christianity and the Social Crisis,'" RTS Bulletin (Rauschenbusch Number; November, 1918), 52-53.

[2]Excerpts from reviews are printed in The Record (May, 1912), 27-29.

[3]Christianizing the Social Order, p. 126.

But that warning is all but lost in his too facile identification of "the Christianized sections of our social order"[1] and his naive conclusion that "the larger part of the work of Christianizing our social order is already accomplished,"[2] on the basis of which he can point to "business life" as "the unregenerate section of our social order."[3] One admirable characteristic of this volume was the author's manifest care in holding together the individual and social sides of redemption.[4] Yet he was unduly optimistic, also, about the effect of the religion of the individual: "After individuals have preached their faith long enough," he said, "the common mind reaches a point of saturation, and moral conviction begins to be precipitated in solid layers."[5] If there were many ready to applaud such sentiments in 1912, there are few today--and even fewer able to accept them. It was this aspect of Rauschenbusch's thought, however, that made him most at home in his own age; but it was his unsturdier side.

Rauschenbusch's too uncritical optimism of 1912 was very shortly tempered by tragedy. His was a sensitive soul that went out to the souls of men everywhere, so that when hostilities erupted in 1914 and Europe was plunged into war he literally went into mourning. He pinned black crepe to the lapel of his coat and more and more wore only a somber expression on his face. Many thought he mourned only for Germany, his father's Fatherland, and his name was taken as an obvious indication of pro-German sentiment. So also his several attempts to stir the American conscience to the moral ambiguities of the war and to the blood-guiltiness of the

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[1] Ibid., pp. 128-55.

[2] Ibid., p. 155; cf. p. 124.

[3] Ibid., p. 156.

[4] Cf. ibid., pp. 458-76.

[5] Ibid., p. 462.

American munitions industry were widely regarded as only specious expressions of a gross and dangerous unpatriotism.[1] For reminders like "nations rarely fight for moral issues alone, always for material interests complicated with moral questions"; and warnings like "when we reverse the first law of morality and make it a duty to kill, the rest of the decalogue tumbles after it"[2]--for thoughts like these he received only abuse and ridicule, even from old friends.[3] His summer cottage in Ontario, the favorite family retreat, was vandalized because of public sentiment against his views.[4] He was a ready victim of the jingoism of his time. The day before his death, when the end was certain, his wife wrote of how in "these last four years of hate he often expressed to friends in letters that he could never be happy again--as he had been."[5] Those who thought he mourned only for Germany were quite mistaken; he mourned for the race. And those convinced that his Jeremiads against the war sprang from an unpatriotic spirit were wrong also, as he himself demonstrated in his last published article.[6] But his critics were right in thinking that his first

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[1]Cf. Rauschenbusch, "Be Fair to Germany: A Plea for Open-Mindedness," The Congregationalist and Christian World (October 15, 1914), 486-87; Rauschenbusch and Charles F. Aked, "Private Profit and the Nation's Honor," The Standard (July 31, 1915), 1486-87. For a series of articles by Rauschenbusch and the answers elicited, see The Standard (August 26, 1916), 1589; (September 16, 1916), 56; (September 30, 1916), 101; (October 21, 1916), 185-86. One of the bitterest attacks on Rauschenbusch in the denominational press appeared in the Journal and Messenger (February 7, 1918), 7.

[2]Rauschenbusch, "Be Fair to Germany," loc. cit.

[3]Cf. Sharpe, Rauschenbusch, chap. 16.

[4]Interview with Glenn B. Ewell, February 26, 1964.

[5]Letter of Pauline E. Rauschenbusch to C. A. Barbour, July 24, 1918.

[6]"Where Dr. Rauschenbusch Stands: A Clear-Cut Statement on the War," The Congregationalist and Advance (July 11, 1918), 50, 63. This is the famous letter to Cornelius Woelfkin on the war. It was widely

allegiance was not to America, for he was first of all a citizen of another country, a kingdom not hemmed in by national boundaries, the Kingdom of God.

It was during these last tragic, unhappy years that Rauschenbusch's third major work, A Theology for the Social Gospel (1917), took form. He conceived a part of his task to be the renovation of theology, and this volume was his attempt to provide a theology "large enough to match the social gospel and vital enough to back it."[1] Actually, the title of the book is inadequate because seemingly one-sided. Had the author included in the title something about "the gospel of the Kingdom of God" he would better have characterized the contents of the work and avoided the appearance of being unilateral. For the center to which all else was made to relate was the doctrine of the Kingdom of God, which he here referred to as "the continuous revelation of the power, the righteousness, and the love of God," and as "humanity organized according to the will of God."[2] The Kingdom, he said,

> is not a concept nor an ideal merely, but an historical force. It is a vital and organizing energy now at work in humanity. Its capacity to save the social order depends on its pervasive presence within the social organism.[3]

It was through the interpretation of this key doctrine that Rauschenbusch sought to tighten the relationship between his social interest and traditional Christian theology. He dedicated this last volume to A. H. Strong in order to make explicit his own gratitude for what he had received from the "older theology" and "to grasp hands through him with all whose thought

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circulated, appearing also in The Standard (August 3, 1918); Christian Work (August 3, 1918); Watchman Examiner; and Zion's Herald.

[1]Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 1.

[2]Ibid., pp. 139, 142. [3]Ibid., p. 165.

has been formed by Jesus Christ."[1] A few months after the book's publication he asserted, in a letter, that it

> was written for the thousands of ministers and laymen who have spent a good part of their life within the old theology and yet feel the draw of the new. Only a few of them could ever free themselves from the terminology and point of view of the old theology, granting that that would be desirable. And if they did, they would thereby almost sever connection with the rank and file of their people. My desire is to furnish them with something which will complement and vitalize whatever real truth they hold, and help them in meeting the needs of the new world. . . .
>
> I am hoping that this book will be preached and plagiarized by a lot of good men, and in that case my mediating position will best serve my fellow men. . . . In this accomodation I have not been dishonest. I have said nothing that I did not believe.[2]

The resultant theology was definitely liberal at points, though many traditional conceptions were not affected and others were simply avoided. Rauschenbusch had all of the liberalism of A. H. Strong--and more--without the scholastic baggage. And with regard to the biblical notion of the Kingdom of God, he went far beyond his teacher.[3] The liberal element in Rauschenbusch's thought particularly came through in what he called the "democratized" conception of God:

> The old conception that God dwells on high and is distinct from our human life was the natural basis for autocratic and arbitrary ideas about him. On the other hand the religious belief that he is immanent in humanity is the natural basis for democratic ideas about him. . . . If he lives and moves in the life of mankind, he can act directly on the masses of men.[4]

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[1] Ibid., foreword.

[2] Letter of Rauschenbusch to W. G. Ballantine, February 4, 1918.

[3] One looks in vain for a theology of the Kingdom in Strong. There is a brief treatment of "the Kingly office of Christ" in the Systematic Theology, pp. 775-76, but nothing on the Kingdom as such. The only extensive discussion I have found is an early sermon (1869) in which the reference is mainly futuristic. Cf. Philosophy and Religion, pp. 358-67.

[4] A Theology for the Social Gospel, pp. 178-79; cf. pp. 174-80.

The "democratized" God is God in the midst of men. As a protest against an exaggerated notion of transcendence that turns God into a tyrant, Rauschenbusch's conception is corrective and helpful. But this "democratized" view of God lends itself very easily to an equally exaggerated immanentism, in which the distinction between creator and creature is blurred and the dependent status of man is overlooked.

The traditionalist strain in Rauschenbusch's thought came through most clearly, perhaps, in his insistence that "any religious tendency or school of theology must be tested by the question whether it does justice to the religious consciousness of sin."[1] Such a remark is particularly noteworthy in the light of the loss of the sense of sin which generally characterized American theological liberalism at this time.[2] Rauschenbusch restated the doctrine of sin in such a way as to enlarge and enrich it in the context of the righteous forces of the Kingdom of God and the satanic powers of the "Kingdom of Evil," with individual and corporate man living in perennial crisis in the contemporaneous demands of the two kingdoms. Taking into consideration the corporate nature of man and the solidarity of the race in sin, he insisted that "sin is not a private transaction between the sinner and God. Humanity always crowds the audience-room when God holds court."[3] As for the then oft-neglected doctrine of original sin, Rauschenbusch claimed to "take pleasure in defending it." He set it down that "depravity of will and corruption of nature are transmitted wherever life itself is transmitted," emphasizing the transmission of evil

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[1] Ibid., p. 32.

[2] Cf. William Adams Brown, Beliefs that Matter (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 126.

[3] A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 48.

biologically and of sin socially via the "super-personal forces of evil."[1] In short, Rauschenbusch was not nearly so optimistic regarding human nature as were many of his liberal contemporaries.

A few months after the publication of A Theology for the Social Gospel Rauschenbusch received from Bible-scholar William G. Ballantine (1848-1937) a letter indicative of the sort of reception many disgruntled liberals were ready to give Rauschenbusch's effort at theological bridge-building. Ballantine criticized the Rochester professor's latest work in about the same spirit and almost precisely the same language as had earlier been used regarding the final edition of Strong's Systematic Theology. Ballantine's letter read:

> I am puzzled by the form in which this book is cast. The new wine is there, . . . sparkling, expanding, vital. But you have tried to put it into the old bottles of an antiquated theological system. Those bottles never looked so old and dried and worthless. Any intelligent reader can see that they have utterly burst, and less intelligent readers will lose some of the new wine. Is such an attempt worthwhile?[2]

In a typically careful and modest reply to this criticism Rauschenbusch bared his soul and revealed the motivating spirit behind his work. He mentioned how his father had "by choice tied up his life with poor and comparatively ignorant people," saying that he himself had spent eighteen years "in the same kind of work." He continued:

> I learned to put my message in simple words, and to adjust myself to the viewpoint of extremely conservative people. No doubt this has shackled me and made my steps short. On the other hand it has kept me democratic in spirit, and it compelled me to study closely by what methods these conservative minds could be enlarged and

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[1] Ibid., p. 58; cf. chaps. 7, 8.

[2] Letter from Ballantine to Rauschenbusch, January 21, 1918. Ballantine, author of several Bible commentaries and formerly president of Oberlin Theological Seminary, was at this time instructor in Bible at the International Y.M.C.A. Training School, Springfield, Massachusetts.

> freed. Some of my liberal friends, who have heard me speak have told me that I seemed to be able to put over more radical stuff, without exciting animosity, than anyone else they knew.

To this description of his own approach Rauschenbusch added a pointed word about Ballantine's:

> I know this would not be your method of working. Your influence on those who go with you comes from your fearless determination to say the last word of truth. We must wait and see what crops our sowing brings.[1]

Thus Rauschenbusch revealed not only the catholicity of his outlook but the evangelical compassion that characterized his work and was to him more important even than scientific finality. It is not that he slighted or despised the fearless search for truth, but that he apparently had much less confidence than some of his contemporaries, like Ballantine, in man's ability to come up with "the last word."

The real difference between Rauschenbusch and Ballantine was the difference between scientific modernism and evangelical or christocentric liberalism. Rauschenbusch was a christocentric liberal. He insisted that the final authority for the Christian is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. For him the Bible was authoritative because of its special relation to Jesus Christ, and the Kingdom of God was central because it was central for Jesus and because it bears his authority, and history had meaning because in Jesus Christ truth became history.[2] Rauschenbusch accepted the scientific method, but always in a qualified manner and never exclusively. In

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[1]Letter of Rauschenbusch to Ballantine, February 4, 1918. For more of this same letter see above, p. 98.

[2]Cf. Rauschenbusch, "Revelation: An Exposition," Biblical World, X (August, 1897), 94-103; "Does the New Testament Provide a Definite and Permanent Church Polity?," Proceedings of the Baptist Congress, 1904, p. 114; "The Influence of Historical Studies on Theology," American Journal of Theology, XI (January, 1907), 127; RTS Bulletin (Rauschenbusch Number; November, 1918), 55; Sharpe, Rauschenbusch, p. 222.

this regard he was much closer to A. H. Strong than to many of his liberal contemporaries. He was, in fact, often criticized, especially by some of the Chicago modernists, for being merely "rhetorical" and not really scientific.[1] The criticism of the modernists substantiates the thesis of Winthrop S. Hudson that "to the end of his life" Rauschenbusch "was an evangelical in an era when evangelicalism as a dynamic movement had quite disappeared."[2] Not only, however, was Rauschenbusch an evangelical; he was also an evangelist--an evangelist of what he chose to call "the new evangelism," which, he said, is really the "Old Gospel," the gospel of the Kingdom of God.[3] In one of his last letters he wrote: "I have always regarded my public work as a form of evangelism, which called for a deeper repentance and a new experience of God's salvation."[4] This new evangelism is inseparable from the concept of racial solidarity, a biblical motif which Rauschenbusch did much to help reinstate in mainstream Protestant theology in America.

For those who grasp the message of Rauschenbusch, "there can be," as Smucker correctly asserts, "no evangelism without social concern, and

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[1]E. g., in a review of Christianizing the Social Order, Shailer Mathews said: "Professor Rauschenbusch is so on fire with a sense of the injustice wrought by capitalism that he does not undertake an impartial discussion, and sometimes says things rhetorically that he would not say scientifically." Biblical World, XLI (February, 1913), 137. On Rauschenbusch and the scientific modernists, cf. Hudson, "Walter Rauschenbusch," Religion in Life, XXX, 416-20.

[2]Hudson, The Great Tradition of the American Churches (New York: Harper, 1953), p. 242.

[3]Rauschenbusch, "The New Evangelism" (New York: The Independent, 1904), p. 6; reprinted from The Independent (May 12, 1904). Cf. Christianity and the Social Crisis, pp. 352 ff.

[4]Letter of Rauschenbusch to Lemuel Call Barnes, May 10, 1918; printed in Watchman Examiner (August 1, 1918), 985. Cf. Vernon Parker Bodein, "The Develppment of the Social Thought of Walter Rauschenbusch," Religion in Life, VI (Summer, 1937), 430-31.

no social concern without evangelism."[1] But in Rauschenbusch's time, the full breadth of this evangelical concern was apparently missed by many of his liberal contemporaries, who were nevertheless quick to pick up his critique of existing institutions and his proposals for social reform--the most transient elements in his thought. Of them it might be said that a whole generation of liberal Christians understood Rauschenbusch--and they misunderstood him. Hudson points out that

> what won Rauschenbusch national recognition were those points . . . where he reflected the influence of what many other people were saying--incidental facets of the New Theology and aspects of contemporary political and economic radicalism. The distinctive and basic elements of his message went unnoticed.[2]

These distinctive elements were also unnoticed by the more conservative Christians who had already been alienated from the social gospel by the "lack of concern for the historic doctrines of Christianity on the part of early advocates" of the movement.[3] The Rochester mentor was, indeed, as Hudson shows, "a lonely prophet."[4] Still, however, he was "the poet of social Christianity," who within a single decade of remarkable creativity "did more than any other in bringing about an emotional fusion between the churches and the liberal tradition."[5] Certainly he helped accomplish such a fusion for numbers of students at the Rochester Theological Seminary, many of whom had been attracted to the school chiefly through the magnetism

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[1]Donovan E. Smucker, "The Rauschenbusch Story," Foundations, II (January, 1959), 12.

[2]Hudson, The Great Tradition, p. 242.

[3]Ernest Trice Thompson, Changing Emphases in American Preaching (Philadelphia: Westminister, 1943), p. 220.

[4]Cf. Hudson, The Great Tradition, chap. 10.

[5]John Herman Randall, Jr., "The Churches and the Liberal Tradition," The Annals, 256 (March, 1948), 162-63.

of his name. And it should not be forgotten that he etched his social concern upon the very heart of the church's life and immeasurably enriched Christian worship with his Prayers of the Social Awakening.[1]

III

Betteridge and Rauschenbusch were the first of the liberals to be added to the Rochester faculty; Joseph William Alexander Stewart[2] was the next, and his appointment, because of the later circumstances of his relation to the school, may be regarded as the confirmation and establishment of the liberalizing trend at the seminary. A Canadian by birth, Stewart was the son of hardy parents who chose the frontier life. In the rustic surroundings of Durham, Ontario, he met the first of several influential teachers, the Reverend William Park formerly of the University of Edinburgh and then pastor of the local Presbyterian church; from him Stewart learned Latin and Greek and an appreciation of literature. A few days before his fifteenth birthday, wearing a top hat and looking much older, young Stewart as eager as he was bright, began teaching in a small country school. Then, desirous of entering the ministry and hungry for more education, he attended the Baptist preparatory college at Woodstock, Ontario, and soon thereafter entered the University of Toronto, where he graduated with highest honors in 1876. Then he returned for additional study to the theological department of Woodstock College. At Toronto he experienced an "intellectual new

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[1]Rauschenbusch, Prayers of the Social Awakening (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1910).

[2]For biographical details, cf. CRDS Bulletin, XX (February, 1948), 127-62; and Stewart's handwritten autobiographical "Thoughts and Reflections at Eighty," which was loaned to me by his son, Professor Harold S. Stewart of the Divinity College at McMaster University. A typescript is now in the library of the American Baptist Historical Society.

birth" while studying the history of philosophy with George Paxton Young, and at Woodstock he was greatly affected by the teaching of an unheralded Latin and Greek professor, James E. Wells, who, reported Stewart, "helped and encouraged me in my religious thinking. He was in some things a modernist before modernism."[1]

Stewart's original religious inheritance was, as he described it, a "pretty stiff . . . Calvinism" and "rather narrow . . . evangelicalism," in which "the ethical interest, so far as doctrines were concerned, was not denied" but "ignored." This heritage led him directly "into trouble" as soon as his own "ethical interest had been awakened."[2] In his struggle to get free from the bondage of these old rigid ideas without at the same time losing his faith, he was assisted not only by those mentioned above, but also by theologian William Newton Clarke, who became his close friend.[3] But quite as important in his intellectual pilgrimage as any of these professional educators was another whom Stewart always regarded as his teacher--"my Mary." Mary Anne McGinn (1845-1914) had left the comfort and culture of Montreal society, to which her father's position in government admitted her, to teach in the crude, unheated rooms of Woodstock College. She was there when Stewart came as a student. Already, when they met, she had been alerted to the world of ideas in the McGill University classroom of Sir John Dawson, colleague of Sir Charles Lyell in his epoch-making geological explorations. And now at Woodstock, Mary the teacher was wooed

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[1]"Thoughts and Reflections," pp. 29-30.

[2]Stewart, "The Story of a Friendship," in Emily Smith Clarke, William Newton Clarke: A Biography with Additional Sketches by His Friends and Colleagues (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), pp. 137-38.

[3]Cf. ibid., pp. 136-56.

by Joseph, the student--against the rules of the school--and in 1875 they were wed. Mrs. Stewart was a very remarkable woman. Not only did she rear seven children, but she also read everything her husband read, and was as ready and able to discuss Harnack or Schleiermacher as to do the ordinary household chores. She provided for Stewart the stimulation that kept his mind restless and made him a student for life. It was commonly said of her in Rochester that "she had no equal in town intellectually."[1]

After a pastorate of several years at Hamilton, Ontario, during which time he was a lecturer in homiletics at McMaster University, Stewart accepted the call to the First Baptist Church of Rochester, where for better than sixteen years he preached to a large and varied congregation which included a considerable segment of the city's intelligentsia, especially professors of the university and seminary. Stewart became known for the depth of his concern for the people and the intellectual quality--as well as the brevity--of his sermons. Similar to Strong in aristocratic bearing, even to the manner of his dress, he apparently was outwardly more congenial and certainly easier to meet. As pastor to intellectuals, he moved in their circles. He was one of the founders of Alpha Chi, which for himself and others in the city served the same function that the older and more exclusive Pundit Club served for others.[2] And he was one of the moving spirits in the local chapter of the Brotherhood of the Kingdom. Also,

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[1]Interview with Harold S. Stewart and Arthur L. Stewart, January 23, 1964.

[2]Alpha Chi stands for Adelphoi Christou, "Brothers of Christ." For the club's early history, cf. Stewart, Twenty Years of Alpha Chi, 1888-1908 (Rochester: 1908). Stewart gives the topics of papers read, as well as the club roster, which includes for the periods indicated the following professors from the seminary: J. W. A. Stewart (1888-1908), A. H. Strong (1888-1908), W. A. Stevens (1888-1908), H. Osgood (1888-93), T. H. Pattison (1888-1904), B. O. True (1890-1902), W. Rauschenbusch (1897-1908).

he was in the vanguard of early ecumenical sentiment in the city. Throughout all this period of his Rochester pastorate, Stewart was a trustee of the seminary, and, as pastor to its president and much of its faculty and student body, he developed and maintained an intimate acquaintance with the affairs of the school. Thus, when in the spring of 1901 President Strong desired assistance in a concerted effort to secure additional endowment funds for the seminary, he turned quite naturally to J. W. A. Stewart. The church released Stewart from all his ministerial duties for several months, and he took up with his usual thoroughness this very concrete challenge and saw it through to a remarkably successful conclusion.

President Strong was so favorably impressed by his pastor's administrative capability that he invited him to become the seminary's first dean, a position which he would fill along with the new chair of Christian ethics. Thus, in 1903, at the age of fifty-one, Stewart joined the Rochester faculty. He taught Christian ethics in a way that combined "the personal and the social with an underscoring of the social."[1] He made plain his social emphasis in his first report to the trustees when he mentioned his two principal texts--Newman Smyth's Christian Ethics, and Francis G. Peabody's Jesus Christ and the Social Question.[2] Just as Stewart was beginning his teaching career young Conrad Henry Moehlman, one of the brightest students of his generation, happened along at Rochester. Of the new professor Moehlman later said:

> Dr. Stewart taught me ethics and saved my soul. For theology to an historically conditioned person meant little, merely aroused dissent. But if ethics was primary in Christianity, even a doubter might continue to labor in the vineyard.[3]

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[1] CRDS Bulletin, XX (May, 1948), 160.

[2] Annual Report of the Union, 1904, p. 43.

[3] CRDS Bulletin, XX (February, 1948), 132.

Capable and influential teacher he was, but he was also an able administrator. For the academic year 1908-09 President Strong took the only sabbatical leave of his forty-year professorial career, and during his absence Dean Stewart was named acting president. At the end of this year Stewart reported to the trustees as follows:

> It has been my ain to adhere strictly to the lines marked out by the President. In no particular has there been a departure from those lines, either by overstepping them, or by neglecting any duty which they indicated.[1]

Revealed in this statement is Stewart's intense loyalty to Strong and manifest unwillingness to take any unfair advantage when he might have done so. Also, however, the statement seems to be saying to the trustees that his own accomplishments would be of a quite different order were he really free to execute his and not someone else's administrative platform. But whatever the exact intention of his remarks, Stewart did again during that year demonstrate an admirable administrative ability. Thus, when Strong retired three years later, Stewart was the logical choice of the trustees to step into the breach as acting president. For the brief duration of this interim administration, he was free to execute his own program as he had not been previously. The sort of program he had and how well he executed it, we will examine more closely in chapter five.

Theologically, Stewart was a christocentric or evangelical liberal, similar in basic orientation and spirit to Rauschenbusch. In 1923, when he retired from his two decades of service to the seminary, Stewart gave a brief account of his intellectual pilgrimage, telling in turn how he had been confronted with and had faced up to the challenge of social ethics, evolution, and biblical criticism. His was no "hothouse" faith; it had

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[1]Annual Report of the Union, 1909, p. 32.

been won through struggle--"the fight of faith." And Stewart had his one great certainty. "Whatever else we believe," he said,

> this before all else we believe, that in Christ we have for us men the unveiling of God. . . . We may not have a metaphysics of the person of Christ, we may stumble at the language of some of the creeds and may feel that it is remote from the best faith of our time, but for all purposes of faith and hope and the conduct and inspiration of life, for us Christ is God, God is in Christ 'reconciling the world unto himself.'[1]

Stewart was remembered for particular traits of his character, like the indomitable moral courage with which he confronted the most perplexing problems of the time, or the open-mindedness which he persistently displayed and which he carried even into old age, when in his own half-shy way he would ask his younger colleagues "to tell him of the latest discoveries in their fields of study and of the most recent opinion held by scholars."[2] In a letter composed shortly before his death at the age of ninety-four he said: "Our common Christianity starts so many questions. Those who have not inquiring minds have an easy time. I am not one of them, and I am not scholar enough to answer some of the questions that arise."[3] "Not scholar enough"--that was Stewart's own judgment upon himself; those who knew him and worked alongside him, however, never doubted his ability. He did not need to apologize simply because he was keen enough to recognize his own limitations, some of which were not so much his personal shortcomings as the natural frailties of the human condition. But this evaluative remark points to another trait of Stewart's personality--his simple modesty, which was rooted in a genuine humility. In the autobiographical remarks of his latter years is a lengthy passage in which he

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[1]Stewart, "Memories and Impressions," RTS Bulletin (June, 1923), 109-110; cf. pp. 96-110.

[2]CRBS Bulletin, XX (February, 1948), 157.

[3]Letter to H. B. Robins, quoted in ibid., p. 162.

confesses how, in his own eyes, he was "so unfit, so poorly prepared for positions to which I was called or appointed." He follows this by a catalogue of such responsibilities, including the Rochester pastorate and seminary professorship. Then with the usual self-abnegation but also consummate insight he adds the following:

> Had I my present knowledge I would refuse to accept these positions at the time I was called to them. But perhaps a large part of the world's work is done by imperfect instruments, and for many tasks it may be impossible to find the truly fit man.[1]

IV

The next of Strong's liberal appointees was Cornelius Woelfkin,[2] a man destined for eminence as one of the foremost pulpiteers of his day. Born to immigrant parents in New York City in 1859, Woelfkin's formal education was cut short at the grammar school level because his father was killed in the Civil War. Thus, when he became professor of homiletics in the Rochester Seminary in 1906, Woelfkin could not have qualified as a student so far as entrance requirements were concerned. But he was nonetheless well equipped for his work. To a keen mind and a brilliant memory he early added an insatiable hunger for truth. He became a voracious reader in many fields. Thus, he overcame his lack of formal schooling by tenfold and better, a fact which others did not fail to see. Between 1905 and 1921 six different colleges and universities bestowed honorary doctorates upon this unschooled but not unlearned minister, and in 1924 he was made an honorary member of the New York University chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. And from time to time he was called upon to lecture in leading

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[1]Stewart, "Thoughts and Reflections," pp. 33-35.

[2]For biographical details, cf. RTS Bulletin (May, 1928), 221-304.

centers of learning. So the academicians, whose halls he had not frequented, came to him with encomiums he had not sought but earned.

As a youth Woelfkin had experienced a highly emotional conversion, "a fact for which he was grateful all his life," since "it gave all of his later preaching the challenge of the evangelistic note."[1] His first specifically religious work was as superintendent of the Sunday School in a Brooklyn church; under his leadership the church experienced a year-long revival. The effectiveness of these Sunday School endeavors opened for him the way into the pulpit in the summer of 1885, and from that time he laid aside his former occupation of sign painting. During the next two decades he was pastor successively to four churches in New Jersey and New York; then, in 1905, because of his manifest evangelical fervor and pulpit appeal, he was made General Evangelist for the American Baptist Home Mission Society. A year later, in the fall of 1906, he was appointed professor of homiletics in the Rochester Seminary. In nominating him President Strong said:

> In my judgment Dr. Woelfkin's mental grasp, preaching ability, genial temper, and spiritual gifts fit him to be an example and object lesson to our students, and his election will do much to perpetuate in our denomination a type of evangelical piety and faith which is greatly needed to counteract the errors of our time.[2]

Woelfkin did become an object lesson in pulpit practice and evangelical piety, but also in how to adapt oneself to the new day facing the church in the twentieth century. In the beginning of his ministry he had been a "premillenarian and literalist."

> All his early friends were fundamentalists. He himself constructed with all the artistic skill at his disposal those

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[1] Ibid., p. 250.

[2] Annual Report of the Union, 1906, p. 39.

> charts containing the beasts and strange animals of Daniel and the Revelation of John. Moreover, he was on record in numerous sermons and addresses as an ardent supporter of premillenarian hypotheses. He separated from all this only when he became convinced that he was breaking faith with himself by continuing to hold such opinions.[1]

In the course of time he became, as was reported of him at his death, "as liberal as he had formerly been conservative."[2] When he joined the seminary faculty Woelfkin had already rejected his earlier literalism and premillennialism, though he had not, as Strong pointed out, surrendered his evangelical piety. And at the seminary, as elsewhere later, Woelfkin "met the acid test of telling the new truth to others,"[3] so that "many a Rochester man of years 1907-1914 owes his spiritual emancipation to him."[4] His own "positive liberalism" was stated most fully in his Cole Lectures, delivered at Vanderbilt in 1926 and published under the title, Expanding Horizons. He referred to the "fictitious lines" between God and the world and opted for a rather thorough-going immanentism, on the basis of which he made much of the mystical union of man with the divine and set forth the evangelical task as the awakening in man of the "divine consciousness," a sort of self-awareness not unlike that of Jesus and apprehended chiefly in him.[5] Hence, in Woelfkin may be seen that strange mixture of traditional evangelical piety and advanced liberal views of the most untraditional sort. Many second generation liberals apparently inherited the doctrine but not the piety, a phenomenon which poses the question whether such doctrine could produce such piety.

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[1] RTS Bulletin (May, 1928), 228.

[2] Watchman Examiner, (January 12, 1928), 40.

[3] RTS Bulletin (May, 1928), 228. [4] Ibid. (June, 1927), 598.

[5] Cf. Expanding Horizons (Nashville: Cokesbury, 1927). See also Moehlman, "Dr. Woelfkin's Fundamentals," Christian Century (November 17, 1927), 1358-59.

Woelfkin had been professor of homiletics for six years when he left Rochester in 1912 to become pastor of the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church in New York City, predecessor to the present Riverside Church. He remained in this prominent pulpit until his death in 1928. At the close of his career the editorial page of The New York Times called him "the most conspicuous and militant protagonist of Modernist views."[1] He acquired this reputation chiefly through his part in the fundamentalist controversy which shook the Northern Baptist Convention in the 'twenties. In that struggle Woelfkin became the acknowledged leader of the liberal faction. At the 1922 convention at Indianapolis, when the fundamentalist bloc tried to secure adoption of a credal standard as a basis of orthodoxy, Woelfkin was ready with a substitute motion to the effect that "the Northern Baptist Convention affirms that the New Testament is the all-sufficient ground of our faith and practice, and we need no other statement." Woelfkin's motion carried by a vote of about two to one.[2]

Shortly thereafter Woelfkin antagonized conservative elements in the denomination by announcing his approval of a plan for open membership in the churches, a scheme which seemed to undercut the traditional Baptist position on baptism. Then at the Seattle convention in 1925, he personally became the focal point of denominational controversy, with the fundamentalists trying on the floor of the convention to have him censured by the whole body. They failed in this attempt, probably at least in part because of the deeply moving statement of his own faith which Woelfkin made

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[1]Quoted in RTS Bulletin (May, 1928), 302.

[2]Annual of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1922, p. 133. Cf. "The Great Debate," Watchman Examiner (June 29, 1922), 814-16.

at the time. In his remarks he showed that even in his later years he had retained in very large measure the ardor of his inherited evangelical pietism.[1]

During these years of controversy Woelfkin was, of course, no longer associated with the Rochester Seminary as a member of its faculty, though through the whole period he was a member of the Board of Trustees. And when the denomination's colleges and seminaries came under attack for their openness to liberal ideas, he rose to their defense. For our purposes it is important simply to recognize that such a man was on the Rochester faculty during the final years of President Strong's administration. It is noteworthy, moreover, that, once away from the halls of learning, Woelfkin did not forget the men with whom he had labored there, nor did he disregard the particular difficulties they were confronting in trying to present new ideas in a changing time.

V

The last of the generation of liberals selected by President Strong was Conrad Henry Moehlman,[2] who in many respects was the culmination of religious liberalism at Rochester. With him the movement was already feeding upon itself; he was the student of Betteridge and Rauschenbusch, Stewart and Woelfkin, as well as Strong. And he was too brilliant to miss anything that was new in the offerings of these men. His intellectual awakening had occurred while he was a high school student in Detroit; he came under the influence of one of those excellent but unheralded teachers, this one a teacher of the classics. By the time young Moehlman set out for college

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[1]Cf. The Baptist (September 5, 1925), 932-33; RTS Bulletin (May, 1928), 266-69.

[2]For biographical details, cf. CRDS Bulletin, I (November, 1928), 88-90; and the unpublished "Morituras Salute" (1943), in CRDS archives.

he was already an enthusiastic student of Greek. He specialized in Latin and Greek at the Universities of Rochester and of Michigan, hoping to teach, though in his senior year he set himself for the Christian ministry. He worked his way through the Rochester Seminary by teaching in the German Department, at the same time becoming the prize pupil of Professor Rauschenbusch. Upon graduation from the seminary in 1905 he went as pastor to a small church in Nebraska, but very soon he was called back to his alma mater to take the classes in church history during the sabbatical leave of Professor Rauschenbusch in 1907-08. In this year of substitute teaching Moehlman demonstrated such promise that he was awarded the first graduate fellowship offered by the seminary. This enabled him to spend the year 1908-09 engaged principally in advanced biblical studies at the University of Chicago.[1] He returned to Rochester in the fall of 1909 to take up the slack in Old Testament, Professor Betteridge being then on sabbatical.

In 1910, after the death of William Arnold Stevens, Moehlman was made a permanent member of the faculty. President Strong said of him at the time:

> Mr. Moehlman has shown himself to be a born teacher. He is a man of versatility, as well as of industry and learning. We congratulate ourselves in being now able to secure his service for a permanency, although other institutions have sought to obtain him.[2]

The "versatility" to which Strong referred proved over the next several years a valuable asset to the seminary, for up to 1918 Moehlman taught for different periods the biblical languages, English Bible, biblical theology, and New Testament interpretation. He was gravitating more and more in the

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[1]At Chicago he studied with such men as James H. Breasted, Edgar J. Goodspeed, J. M. P. Smith, and Ira M. Price.

[2]Annual Report of the Union, 1910, p. 35.

direction of historical studies, and in 1918, when Rauschenbusch died, he moved to the chair of church history, which he then occupied continuously until his retirement in 1944.

With Moehlman the application of the scientific method in biblical and historical studies was no longer the tentative hesitant venture that it was for some of his teachers and older colleagues at Rochester. Instead, his advocacy and use of the new method was vigorous, unapologetic, and thoroughgoing. This method was,in fact, to his mind, a mark--perhaps the distinguishing mark--of that religious liberalism which he boldly championed. "Applied to theology," he said, "liberalism is that kind of theological science which refuses to work with any other means and methods of research and interpretation than the scientific."[1] So, religious liberalism, according to Moehlman at least, is adherence to a method which excludes other methods!

Moehlman held steadily to the scientific approach, but he certainly was not blind to the relativism of knowledge thus acquired, nor did he suffer delusions with regard to the possibility of absolute objectivity in historical study. He recognized that "we live in the epoch of relativity,"[2] and he could admit, with admirable candor, that "an altogether accurate and complete description of any event has never been composed and probably cannot be."[3] Despite such a recognition and such an admission, however, he pledged himself, as a "sincere historian," to "the ideal of Adolph von Harnack," which he quoted as follows:

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[1]Moehlman, "Liberal Protestantism," in Religion in the Twentieth Century, ed. V. T. A. Ferm (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), p. 259.

[2]"Is the Study of the History of Christianity Practical?" RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 216.

[3]"How Dependable Is History?" CRDS Bulletin, VIII (May, 1936), 264.

> In taking up a theological book we are in the habit of inquiring first of all as to the point of view of the author. In an historical work there is no room for such inquiry. The question here is, whether the author is in sympathy with the subject about which he writes, whether he can distinguish original elements from those that are derived, whether he has a thorough acquaintance with his material, whether he is conscious of the limits of historical knowledge, and whether he is truthful. These requirements constitute the categorical imperative for the historian: but they can only be fulfilled by an unwearied self-discipline. Hence, every historical study is an ethical task. The historian ought to be faithful in every sense of the word; whether he has been so or not is the question on which his readers have to decide.[1]

This notion of a presuppositionless approach to the historical task is the ideal of Harnack, the historian of dogma who had owned no dogma. And Harnack's ideal is Moehlman's. It is noteworthy that Moehlman quoted and openly subscribed to the above statement in 1936, at a time when liberal Christian thinkers generally were becoming more and more disillusioned with such an approach. The fact is, furthermore, that Moehlman committed himself again to this "high standard" in 1955.[2] He was simply reaffirming both in 1936 and in 1955 the basic tenet by which he had worked since the beginning of his professional career. That he did not subsequently budge from this position shows that he remained an "unrepentant liberal" for all of his eighty-one years.

Moehlman was a faithful churchman, and, for the better part of his three-and-a-half decades of teaching in the seminary, he was instructor of a weekly men's Bible class in one of the local Baptist churches. He was in considerable demand as a speaker, both in popular religious gatherings and in academic circles--in Rochester as well as beyond. It was his overarching concern for the communication of truth that led him early in his

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Moehlman, Ordeal By Concordance (New York: Longmans Green & Co., 1955), p. xiv.

years at the seminary to assume the editorship of the Bulletin, the school's official publication. He added to its established functions of publicizing and reporting events of the school's life the presentation of scholarly articles and the discussion of trends in thought and developments in religion. In other words, Moehlman transformed the Bulletin from a public relations piece into a journal of information and ideas. He did not discontinue the public relations angle, but enlarged its scope to make it truly representative of the life of the school. In effect, he was rendering an exceedingly important service to the school. That the ideas reverberating in its halls were exposed in the pages of the Bulletin helped to keep the school's critics honest--or at least made it possible for the validity of criticisms to be checked. But much more important is the fact that the friends of theological education among the alumni, in the churches, and in the Christian and academic worlds in general, could keep abreast of what was going on at Rochester.

Moehlman was a prolific writer. From his busy pen issued a steady stream of papers, formal addresses, articles, and books. He wrote for the people as well as for the scholars. He was an iconoclast, out to break the idols of biblicism, credalism, and ecclesiastical authoritarianism. He insisted that Protestantism could not survive unless it abandoned its adherance to the outworn authority of an inadequate Bible.[1] There were, according to him, only two ways to view the Bible, the way of the historical critic or the way of the naive supernaturalist,[2] and he devoted a

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[1]Cf. Protestantism's Challenge (New York: Harper, 1939), chap. 1.

[2]Cf. his remark that "Christian scholarship is of two sorts, historical and fundamentalist." The Christian-Jewish Tragedy (Rochester: Printing House of Leo Hart, 1933), p. 233.

whole volume to the thesis that the Bible is indeed "unknown" if not known via the historical method.[1] The application of this method shows that "the outstanding value of the Bible is its rich deposit of religious experience," and "religious experience," maintained Moehlman, "does not at all fear the relativity of the Bible." Experience takes precedence over doctrine, so that "Paul is of greater significance than his views."[2]

For Moehlman it seems that the superb blunder of early Christianity was that "it transformed the religion of Jesus into a theology, made that theology exceedingly complicated, and thereupon insisted upon regarding this partial deposit of truth as complete and final."[3] On this basis Moehlman was able to deny any contemporary significance or authority to the classical creeds, though he did give considerable attention to an analysis of their origin and contents, mainly to counteract fundamentalist attempts to impose credal standards on the schools. In 1922, for instance, when fundamentalist Baptist forces were being marshalled for the assault that Woelfkin did so much to disarm, Moehlman examined the creeds for their answer to the question, "What are the fundamentals of Christianity?" He had no difficulty showing wide disagreement over "fundamentals" in extant creeds and confessional statements. He concluded his article with a detailed examination of the Apostles' Creed, in which he thought to

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[1] The Unknown Bible (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1926).

[2] Ibid., p. 254.

[3] "Is Christianity Vanishing?" The Baptist (April 25, 1931), 524. This was a major emphasis in his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Michigan, The Combination Theos Soter as Explanation of the Primitive Christian Use of Soter as Title and Name of Jesus (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1918). Cf. also chap. 6 of Protestantism's Challenge and his final published volume which purports to show How Jesus Became God (New York: Philosophical Press, 1960).

demonstrate the creed's inadequacy as a normative doctrinal symbol by showing through a genetic study that its composition was gradual, extending over several centuries.[1] This particular use of the genetic approach was a significant characteristic of Moehlman's method: the theological was explained--or explained away--by means of a socio-historical interpretation, as if the delineation of the circumstances of the origin and development of an idea was enough to empty it of content. "Happy is he who can understand the causes of things."[2]

Moehlman often pointed out that Christianity began with a gospel _of_ Jesus and very soon was transformed into a gospel _concerning_ Jesus. He wanted to recapture the former and was confident it could be done.

> The historical method of interpretation applied to Christian theology and the New Testament enables the student to work down through the glacial drift and shale and limestone and medina to a more original stratum. Once there he discovers the main emphases in the gospel of Jesus.[3]

As Moehlman saw it, the genetic approach opened the way to the exercise of a scientific objectivity that could actually distinguish between the essence of Christianity--that is, the teachings of Jesus--and all later and therefore unnecessary accretions. Only by means of a remarkably bold confidence in the scientific method could he move with such ease to the solution of perplexing problems like that of differentiating the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith.

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[1] "What Are the Fundamentals of Christianity?" _Journal of Religion_, II (January, 1922), 16-26; printed also in _RTS Bulletin_ (June, 1922), 102-09. Cf. "About the Apostles' Creed," _CRDS Bulletin_, VIII (March, 1936), 184-201; "The Development of the Apostles' Creed," _ibid._, III (March, 1931), 286-87; "The Origin of the Apostles' Creed," _Journal of Religion_, XIII (July, 1933), 301-17; and _Protestantism's Challenge_, chaps. 2 and 3.

[2] Virgil, as quoted by Augustine, _Enchiridion_, V, 16.

[3] "Is Christianity Vanishing?" _The Baptist_ (April 25, 1931), 525.

What Moehlman wanted was the facts--the real history, the Jesus that was rather than the Christ that men imagined. And what he wanted of Jesus was his essential gospel, his own teaching. His goal was to get back to Jesus and thereby to fulfill what he took to be the initial intent of the Protestant reformers. As late as 1939 he said:

> Original Protestantism desired to return to Jesus. It failed to work this miracle because the essential historical data and method were not available. Now, at last, Protestantism may know at least approximately what Jesus thought of God, of man, of the better community, of the good life.[1]

This essence of Jesus' thought Moehlman sometimes summarized about as follows:

> The main emphases in the gospel of Jesus [are] a faith that love reigns at the heart of the world, that God cares, that the human personality is of infinite worth, that men must be brotherly and finally establish the cooperative commonwealth.[2]

But Moehlman's favorite way of summarizing the essence of the gospel was by referring to what he called "the ethical quadrilateral of Jesus," which "consisted of purity, love, heroism and humility. Purity and love are primary virtues. Heroism is the reaction of purity and love to wrong. Humility is the reaction of purity and love to need."[3] This note Moehlman never tired of sounding, that the gospel was in essence an ethical demand.

Moehlman was not unlike his fundamentalist contemporaries in longing for the pristine purity of the gospel and, in effect, though for a different reason, denying the validity of the development of doctrine.

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[1] Protestantism's Challenge, p. 220.

[2] "Is Christianity Vanishing?" The Baptist (April 25, 1931), 525. Cf. also "Our Religious Heritage," CRDS Bulletin, IX (November, 1936), 49; Protestantism's Challenge, pp. 260-61 and 267-68; and The Story of the Ten Commandments (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1928), pp. 298-99.

[3] Protestantism's Challenge, p. 260; cf. pp. 260-69; The Church as Educator (New York: Hinds, Hayden & Eldredge, Inc., 1947), p. 184; and How Jesus Became God, p. 19.

Moehlman denied the doctrine that developed, while the fundamentalist denied that doctrine had developed. It would not, I think, be wrong to say that Moehlman's whole career was an apologetic for Protestantism to return to the simplicity of an original, pre-theological Christian era; in fact, he regarded this as the only hope for the survival of Protestantism.[1] In this respect, his approach was quite similar to that of Harnack, to whom he expressed his indebtedness in the dedication of a volume.[2]

Just as Moehlman had no use for credal or biblical authority, so also he strongly resisted any and every form of ecclesiastical authoritarianism. Involved in his program for a return to Jesus was the notion that Protestantism should become indeed a religion of the spirit rather than of authority, an idea which he not unhappily borrowed from Auguste Sabatier.[3] Moehlman maintained that religious authoritarianism and the democratic spirit could not mix. Hence, in his generation he was a leading champion of the wall of separation between church and state, which meant, in other words, that he was a foremost critic of what he took to be the serious threat of Roman Catholicism to the American way of life.[4]

So Moehlman rejected religious authoritarianism of every sort and, in doing so, rejected also all the outward forms of authority--whether

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[1]This is the thesis of Protestantism's Challenge, a volume which may rightly be taken as a summary of his point of view and very nearly a summary of his whole literary output.

[2]The Unknown Bible.

[3]Cf. ibid., pp. 133, 258; and The Catholic-Protestant Mind (New York: Harper, 1929), pp. 198-200. Cf. also Sabatier, Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit, trans. L. S. Houghton (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1904).

[4]Cf. The Catholic-Protestant Mind; The Wall of Separation Between Church and State (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951); and School and Church: the American Way (New York: Harper, 1944).

ecclesiastical, credal, or biblical. This does not mean that he bowed to no authority, but it does mean that he owned no authority outside himself. In other words, his religion was an unqualified individualism. He quoted with approval the following lines from Phillips Brooks:

> If we lay aside--not sadly and reluctantly, but gladly and as getting rid of an incumbrance--if so we lay aside the notion of infallible authority, then what remains? I answer, individualism. . . . There is no hope for the world but in a healthy individualism. And individualism in matters of thought means private judgment.[1]

A heightened individualism, which he was wont to call "personalism," was the heart as well as the starting-place and goal of all Moehlman's thought. The notion of the unfettered liberty of the autonomous person was, according to him, the democratic ideal, the true Protestant principle, and the real genius of the Baptists.[2] As he read history, there were "two typical forms" in which Christianity had appeared--"authoritarianism and personalism"--the heirs of one being fundamentalism and of the other religious liberalism.[3] The latter, that is, religious liberalism, he defined as, "in essence, . . . insistence upon the freedom of the individual against any attempt to coerce him or control him." It follows, then, that "religion is a private and personal matter,"[4] a notion which, if pressed to its logical conclusion, denies not only the authority but also the existence of

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[1]"Our Religious Heritage," CRDS Bulletin, IX (November, 1936), 35.

[2]Cf. "What Is Protestantism?" RTS Bulletin (November, 1926), 350, 360; "The Baptist Principle," ibid. (November, 1920), 19; and "Liberal Protestantism," in Religion in the Twentieth Century, p. 268.

[3]"Our Religious Heritage," CRDS Bulletin, IX (November, 1936), 32. Cf. "What Is Protestantism?" RTS Bulletin (October, 1926), 219-20.

[4]"Liberal Protestantism," in Religion in the Twentieth Century, p. 259.

the church. The only kind of ecclesiology really consonant with this view is the doctrine that every man's hat is his own church--a questionable ecclesiology, to say the least. Moehlman himself did not explicitly deny the doctrine of the church in his thought, but linked to his hyper-individualism a hyper-congregationalism.[1]

Moehlman's individualism was applied more consistently to the sacraments. Regarding baptism, for instance, he favored the view that it is "an individual matter apart from church membership, an affair between the individual and his Lord." On this view baptism is not "an ecclesiastical initiatory rite" or "prerequisite for church membership," but altogether "an individual act of obedience."[2] With his denial of the corporate and churchly character of baptism, Moehlman was providing the rationale for men like Woelfkin to lead their churches to adopt policies of "open membership," by which it became church policy not to base membership upon baptism.[3] And all of this followed from the application of individualism to theology. With Moehlman and his kind Protestant individualism reached its peak.

What we have in Moehlman is a brilliant self-conscious and self-critical man linking together and basing his thought upon two of the major emphases of his time--individualism and the scientific method. These were the two foci of his thought, and he did not shrink from drawing out the

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[1] Cf. "The Baptist Principle," RTS Bulletin (November, 1920), 19.

[2] "Christian Baptism," Crozer Quarterly, III (April, 1926), 66-67; and RTS Bulletin (May, 1926), 36-37. Cf. Protestantism's Challenge, pp. 30-31.

[3] For Moehlman's discussion of various plans of membership practiced in Baptist churches, cf. Protestantism's Challenge, pp. 30-31. On the eucharist, cf. pp. 31-42.

full implications of both. Late in life he frankly identified himself with "humanism," by which he meant "belief in the supreme worth of human life and of man." And he looked forward to "a new religious synthesis based upon science and the democratic faith."[1] In all of this Moehlman was certainly imbibing deeply of the liberal spirit. But in his exclusive adherance to an exclusive method, he moved considerably beyond evangelical liberalism, as such, to modernism. He was Rochester's first as well as her most stalwart scientific modernist.

Moehlman's interests were as broad as creation, as may be deduced from his writings. And, as testified by two of his one-time students, he linked to this breadth of interest "an enthusiasm for investigation that was contagious, a sense of humor and sympathy that made him a delightful companion, and a zeal for creating scholars that has left many ministers and teachers in his debt."[2] It is reported that he was fond of addressing senior students about to graduate from the seminary somewhat in the following manner:

> It has been good to know you and to have you in these halls of learning. After you've been gone from here for two years no one will ever know you came close to an academic institution, for you will quit reading and you will quit studying. You will be either too lazy or too busy.[3]

Of course Moehlman had his tongue in his cheek and was at his sarcastic best when he said that, but he knew full well the temptations young ministers would face. In his way Moehlman was a most effective teacher. He succeeded in raising questions in his students' minds. His own abilities

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[1]"Liberal Protestantism," in Religion in the Twentieth Century, pp. 266-67.

[2]J. W. Nixon and W. S. Hudson, eds., Christian Leadership in a World Society (Rochester: CRDS, 1945), p. 6.

[3]Interview with Professor J. R. Branton, February 20, 1964.

and accomplishments precisely fitted him for the task of requiring hard work and demanding intellectual honesty. And, despite his seeming harshness, there was a close, even affectionate, bond between himself and his students. One of his students--one who did not fail to learn--was Winthrop S. Hudson, who became his teacher's successor in the chair of church history at the Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Professor Hudson, in the foreword to his very influential volume, The Great Tradition of the American Churches, expressed his gratitude "to Conrad Henry Moehlman who early taught me never to fear fact nor evade truth, no matter how unpleasant the conclusions might be."[1] This work of Hudson's is a telling critique of the extremes of American religious liberalism, and anyone familiar with its contents can easily imagine just how "unpleasant" its conclusions might be to Moehlman.

Moehlman was a relentless scholar, impatient with others--even his readers. He could not endure uncritical scholarship.[2] His own critical edge was always well-honed, as is manifest in the tone of his writings. He seems at times almost wholly lacking in literary grace. This is partly deliberate and stylistic, as evidenced by his favored method of piling up great heaps of quotations representing diverse points of view on the subject at hand, with the reader left to sort things out for himself and to arrive at his own conclusion on the basis of the evidence presented. Of course, in such cases, Moehlman's selection and arrangement of material was

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[1]Hudson, The Great Tradition of the American Churches, p. 14.

[2]Cf. his critique of D. R. Sharpe's Walter Rauschenbusch in "Walter Rauschenbusch and His Interpreters," Crozer Quarterly, XXIII (January, 1946), 34-50.

always calculated to achieve his desired result. Perhaps this was a lecture technique which made its way into his writings unaccompanied by the discussion that would follow in the classroom.[1]

After reading Moehlman's works by chapters and volumes, one is left wondering if it was not a very rare thing for him to engage in the patience of empathy in his persistent quest for the facts on any given matter. If he lacked that patience, he lacked also the patience due his readers. In his writings he is invariably moving on at a rapid pace, dropping occasional hints and tidbits that are often not pertinent, rarely pausing to summarize or racapitulate, frequently leaving the reader dangling and wondering where he is headed. Moehlman seldom demonstrated the art of his profession. It was not that he was incapable of such, for on occasion he showed stylistic originality and considerable skill, especially when writing for the uninitiated, for the parish minister or layman.[2] But more often than not his writing displays little of synthetic skill and nothing of artistic symmetry. It is interesting along this line to note a remark he once made in a graduation address at the seminary. Referring to religious art and ceremony, he reminded his audience of ministers and future ministers that "truth must never yield to the considerations of art. . . . The risk of beauty to the religious life is exceedingly great."[3]

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[1]This stylistic method is so characteristic that it may be examined in almost any of Moehlman's writings. For an example of his more skillful use of this technique, cf. his treatment of "The Inherited Protestant Faith," Protestantism's Challenge, chap. 2.

[2]E.g., the opening pages of The Unknown Bible.

[3]"Our Religious Heritage," CRDS Bulletin, IX (November, 1936), 44-45.

It was no mistake that in the late 'forties V. T. A. Ferm regarded as "inevitable" the choice of Conrad Henry Moehlman to contribute the essay on "Liberal Protestantism" to a symposium on Religion in the Twentieth Century. For, as Ferm himself put it at the time, Moehlman was "without question an outstanding name in this field in America. All his professional life he has stood up for the cause in the church."[1] This is certainly an accurate assessment, for, as we noted above, Moehlman maintained his liberal stance to the very end. That he suffered somewhat from the myopia of a latter-day liberal is indicated by his 1937 reference to "the much praised Karl Barth during the short period of his sway."[2] As Ferm recognized, Moehlman was in many respects a representative liberal for his period. He was not less representative in that the main thrust of his work was more negative than positive; he and his kind cleared the theological landscape of much underbrush that had for too long been accumulating. Yet, it must not be forgotten, he was also an unflinching adherent of the positive elements in the liberal attitude. His treatment of The Christian-Jewish Tragedy (1933), for instance, is still a solid antidote to anti-Semitism. As for Moehlman himself, near the end of his way he claimed "the joy of a good conscience."[3]

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[1] Religion in the Twentieth Century, p. 256.

[2] Significantly enough, this statement appears in an article entitled, "In Defense of Optimism," CRDS Bulletin, X(October, 1937), 26. In a book review written in 1932 he had said: "The European Barthian wave is receding, and the tide fails to come in here." Ibid., IV (March, 1932), 339.

[3] This is the title of his essay in The Protestant Credo, ed. V. T. A. Ferm (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953).

VI

These, then, were the Rochester liberals in the days of A. H. Strong--Betteridge, Rauschenbusch, Stewart, Woelfkin, and Moehlman. All of these were brought to the faculty by President Strong, and all of them except Woelfkin were at one time his students. Of the five, Betteridge was Strong's colleague over the longest period--twenty-one years--and Moehlman for the briefest--five years (including a year away for study). Rauschenbusch worked alongside him fifteen years, Stewart nine, and Woelfkin seven. Most of what has been related in this chapter, with the exception of Rauschenbusch's final work, of Woelfkin's interchange with the fundamentalists, and of Moehlman's varied articulation of his views, actually occurred during Strong's administration--and probably all of it occurred in intent, for none of these men significantly changed his mind late in life. Up to Strong's retirement in 1912, these liberals and the Big Five who had preceded them were the chief figures in the theological transition at Rochester. But one major participant remains to be added--Professor John Henry Strong, son of the seminary president. Something of his character and his exceedingly interesting role in the life of the school will be treated in the next chapter, along with other aspects of the change which occurred during the presidency of A. H. Strong.

CHAPTER IV

A. H. STRONG, THE SEMINARY, AND WINDS OF CHANGE

In the preceding chapters we have looked at the three faculties of President Strong: the group he inherited and the two constellations of scholars he gathered--the Big Five and the liberals. In the course of the present chapter we will pass over the same ground again, reviewing Strong's administration once more, but this time from a different direction. Here our concern will be to notice some of the factors that facilitated the emergence of religious liberalism at Rochester, as well as a few of the internal effects of the transition. Again, of course, it is A. H. Strong who is the central figure, for this was his period, and at Rochester, at least, he dominated. He dominated until the latter days of his long career when, as we shall see, he began to lose his grip on things.

The response at Rochester to the threefold challenge of the scientific age was varied. The scientific method was accepted very early in at least a qualified manner. This was the case, for instance, with E. G. Robinson, with Strong, Stevens, and True of the Big Five. Of course, all of the liberals adopted the new method, with Moehlman embracing it not only wholeheartedly but also exclusively. Quite the opposite, of course, was Professor Osgood, who categorically rejected the higher critical approach in biblical studies. The evolutionary hypothesis attracted much less concern at Rochester, chiefly because it was very early adopted in a modified form by President Strong. He was, in fact, the only one at

Rochester who devoted much attention to evolutionary ideas in his writings. The others, with the exception of Osgood, whose biblical literalism would not allow him to accept a changed view of the Genesis creation narratives, seemingly incorporated evolutionary notions into their schemes of thought with little stir. There was not at Rochester, however, anyone like John Fiske or Lyman Abbott, who made evolution the central motif in interpreting the Christian faith. The third aspect of the challenge facing the church was the new urban-industrial situation that issued in the social gospel, which, of course, in the person of Walter Rauschenbusch, was articulated with passion and with force at Rochester. While no one else at the seminary explicated as fully as Rauschenbusch the social implications of the Christian gospel, we have observed that A. H. Strong did not omit this emphasis from his thought. All of the liberal generation embraced the social gospel to some extent, and no one at Rochester steadfastly set his face against it. Other evidences of urban concern were the fact of the seminary's location in Rochester and the existence of the German Department, for the apologetic for the original move from Hamilton to Rochester had been the importance of being in touch with the new urban life, and all of the early German churches were located in the cities.

I

What we have seen so far is something of the diversity of understanding of the Christian faith that existed at the Rochester Seminary from its founding to the retirement of President Strong in 1912. Ideologically, it is a long journey from Howard Osgood to Conrad Henry Moehlman. These two were not contemporaries, which is probably fortunate,

though they do represent the outer edges of the total body of diverse opinion which included all the other persons of the faculty. We have seen enough of the variety present within the school to recognize that it was anything but homogeneous--though there was a functional unity, which at very least was a commitment to realizing the goal of theological education. To say that the Rochester professors had a common commitment is not of course to suggest that they were possessed of a common conception of the purpose of a theological seminary. Probably they were at least as much divided on that question as on any other. It should be evident from what has been shown that Professor Osgood regarded the seminary as a place for putting men in the doctrinal molds of a rigid orthodoxy, with every minister of the gospel somehow to use his gifts within the confines of a narrow biblical literalism. Moehlman, on the other hand, took the modern secular university as the model for the theological school, and worked to produce ministers who would give utterance to the truth as discerned via the scientific method.[1]

But the conception of theological education which provided the working basis for the Rochester Seminary during the period we are considering was that of President Strong, who often expressed himself on the nature of the Christian ministry and the task of educating that ministry.[2] He recalled that the aim of the seminary's founders was to produce "not only scholars but preachers."[3] Therefore, he tried to cultivate in students

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[1]Cf. Moehlman, "Our Religious Heritage," CRDS Bulletin, IX (November, 1936), 43.

[2]Cf. his regular reports to the trustees which were published each year in the Annual Report of the Union. For more extensive treatments, cf. Philosophy and Religion, pp. 269-318; Christ in Creation, pp. 314-31; Miscellanies, I, pp. 278-303.

[3]Annual Report of the Union, 1902, p. 33.

"the habit of theological thought" rather than "the acceptance of theological formulas."[1] That this was his intention does not mean that he was unfailingly successful in fulfilling it; he certainly did not remain always free from at least appearing to be the disseminator of theological bread to be swallowed without being chewed. However, the appointments made to the faculty during his term of office demonstrate more clearly than words that in intent Strong was anything but the dogmatist giving out answers to his own questions. He regarded "freedom of discussion and the right of private judgment in the interpretation of Scripture" as "essential principles of the Baptist faith," and affirmed in 1900 that "we recognize these principles in our seminary instruction."[2] Also, according to him, the seminary was committed to a belief in the development of the doctrine--"not in the sense that the truth changes, but in the sense that men's apprehension of the truth improves from age to age." On this basis he maintained that

> theology can gain in breadth and depth, by taking in the fresh air of modern philosophy and science. . . . All that is good in modern thought and life is the work of Christ and the product of the Holy Spirit.[3]

Strong's teacher and predecessor, E. G. Robinson, had established a pattern of excellence in the work of the seminary, and Strong delighted in accepting and continuing this emphasis. Baptist that he was, his approach to theological education and his notion of the pastoral ministry were not particularly democratic. As early as 1879 he was proud to report of the school that the academic standard set by "the faculty" was "so high

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[1]Strong, Historical Discourse, p. 47.

[2]Ibid., p. 48. [3]Ibid.

that no indolent or incompetent person shall be able to remain a member of the seminary."[1] And, desirous as he must have been for filling the halls with students, he knew his best service to the churches was to keep the standard high; in doing so he set the pace for the rest of the faculty. He took the lead in the faculty action of 1890 limiting admission only to college graduates or those of equal competence. And in 1900, when the school had the funds to provide assistance to almost every student who could gain admission, it was President Strong who proposed a policy of "refusing aid to slipshod and emotional men who cannot or will not do serious intellectual work."[2]

So, Strong wanted students who were thinkers, and he knew that to have that he must have a faculty not only able and willing but also free to think. Thereby he hoped to produce ministers sound in doctrine, but he knew that "with sound doctrine . . . there should be the spirit of love." Both these emphases he had in mind from the very beginning of his work:

> I wished to make men think for themselves, but I also wished them to seek truth from the word and the Spirit of God. The religious life of the seminary seemed to me quite as important a concern as its intellectual activities.[3]

Thus Strong took it as his "solemn duty to promote the spiritual life of our students as well as their intellectual life." On his view, faith belonged at the center of the task of the theological seminary.

> The right heart is an indispensable condition of religious knowledge, and only he who does Christ's will can understand his doctrine. The true heart will ensure the clear head, able to take in all that modern science can furnish, yet to

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[1] Annual Report of the Union, 1879, p. 30.

[2] Historical Discourse, p. 42.

[3] Annual Report of the Union, 1902, p. 33.

> prove all things and hold fast only that which is good. . . . Not knowledge, but faith, is God's measure of a man. . . . And it is faith that lays hold of God in Christ, and makes him ours. So I would make this a school of faith, a school of the prophets, a school of constructive rather than destructive criticism.[1]

It is evident, then, that in Strong's mind the freedom at Rochester was decidedly the freedom of the Christian man, freedom in the context of faith.

President Strong assumed the faith of the professor and the student, and on that basis deliberately cultivated the life of the spirit at the seminary, chiefly by means of the daily noon prayer meeting. This informal midday gathering of some fifteen to twenty minutes duration was a regular part of the life of the school for better than thirty of the forty years of Strong's term of office.[2] At the time of his retirement, it was reported that "alumni revisiting the seminary tell us, almost to a man, that the noon-day prayer meeting was the most vitalizing force in their education." Those same alumni knew, however, that at the seminary "the intellectual life" was never "at any time or in any degree . . . allowed to languish." President Strong

> insisted upon an ever advancing standard in the intellectual life of the seminary. . . . The testimony [of former students] is . . . that . . . the actual intellectual demands of the seminary are decidedly more insistent than the demands of the college. Dr. Strong has never allowed students or faculty to imagine for a moment that at Rochester one could take in his oars and drift with the tide.[3]

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[1] The Record (May, 1909), 10. Cf. ibid., (January, 1907), 2.

[2] The reader may catch for himself something of the spirit of the prayer meeting by examining the brief addresses of President Strong printed in his One Hundred Chapel Talks.

[3] The Record (May, 1912), 4.

Thus, President Strong was a man who tried diligently both in his own person and in the school over which he presided to keep together and to strike a balance between heart and mind, faith and reason.

There were at Rochester, then, a variety of conceptions of the nature of the theological seminary, though it was President Strong's which provided the working framework. At Rochester, as probably at similar institutions generally, whatever was done officially was most likely the product of a whole series of compromises of various persons of diverse points of view. Particularly is this true of the curriculum, where changes in emphasis and outlook were bound in time to be reflected.[1] When Strong became president of the seminary, the curriculum was grouped under the five departments of biblical literature, ecclesiastical history, apologetics, theology, and homiletics-pastoral theology. In 1878 the offerings were rearranged under seven headings: Hebrew, Greek, church history, theology, homiletics, pastoral theology, and elocution. The only major change thereafter for two-and-a-half decades was the abolition of the "English course" in 1890, which meant thenceforth that all students would be required to demonstrate a proficiency in Hebrew and Greek.[2] Otherwise, through the final quarter of the nineteenth century, the course of study remained essentially the same; it was predetermined, no electives being offered.

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[1]The information on curricular changes is drawn from an examination of each Annual Catalogue and Annual Report of the Union (particularly the president's report contained therein) for the years 1872 through 1912, as well as the minutes of the faculty. Cf. Moehlman, "The Story of the Curriculum of the Rochester Theological Seminary," RTS Bulletin (November, 1926), 265-84.

[2]The adoption of this plan entailed the almost certain loss of contributions from many of the smaller churches. Cf. Annual Report of the Union, 1890, p. 26.

The years 1903 and 1904 saw several significant modifications in the curriculum. In 1902, when Walter Rauschenbusch was transferred from the German Department to the regular faculty, there was a lively hope that sociological studies might be introduced at Rochester. This hope was fulfilled in 1903, not in the person of Professor Rauschenbusch, but instead with the coming of J. W. A. Stewart as professor of Christian ethics and sociology. At the same time the study of the English Bible was made a regular part of the curriculum. This came about because colleges and universities, in orienting their work more and more to the natural sciences, were dropping or de-emphasizing the classical and biblical languages, so that students coming to the seminary were inadequately prepared in those subjects. Concentration on the English translation of the Bible rather than its study in the original languages also reflected the growing discontent of liberals with detailed exegesis, for which they tended to substitute thematic and comparative studies. The initial work in English Bible was offered by Professor John Henry Mason (1850-1928),[1] who was also given the responsibility in 1904 of teaching a required course in the theory and practice of Christian missions. Mason's significance lies not in the freshness of his ideas but in the simple fact that he was a sort of buffer man in the inauguration at Rochester of these two new disciplines. There had been for several years a growing interest at the seminary in the missionary task as viewed academically; since 1899 each catalogue had carried an announcement to the effect that "Christian missions" was not

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[1]Born in New Hampshire, May 29, 1850. B.A., Brown University, 1872; graduated RTS, 1877. Pastor of churches in New England and New York State, 1877-1903. At RTS: Huntley professor of English Bible, 1903-13. Resident of Beverly, Massachusetts, 1913-28; died June 24, 1928.

neglected in the curriculum but was dealt with indirectly throughout the whole course of study. The awareness of the importance of this area as a separate discipline had developed sufficiently by 1904 for a formal course to be introduced. After 1909 this single required course was supplemented by the presentation in the fall of each year of a series of lectures by the Reverend Henry C. Mabie (1847-1918), former Secretary of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. The work of Mason and Mabie was only a beginning--but it was that--in the general fields of the Christian world mission and world religions, areas to which other schools were also increasingly becoming sensitive at the beginning of the new century.[1]

Thus by 1904, the curriculum at Rochester was being significantly affected by the rise of religious liberalism. The sociological approach had been introduced and Christian ethics was presented in its social dimension; exegetical study of the Bible in Hebrew and Greek was being displaced by a survey of the English Bible; and the mission of the church was being treated not only as outreach but also as encounter with the religions of the world. It would be too much to say that the comparative religion approach was in vogue at Rochester, but the way had at least been opened for that method to come into prominence at a later time.. Along with the changes noted here, there was in 1904 one other very important indication of the new day at the seminary: for the first time in the

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[1]The rise of interest in these two closely related disciplines is surveyed in Olav Guttorn Myklebust, The Study of Missions in Theological Education, 2 vols. (Oslo: Egede Instituttet, 1955); Joseph M. Kitagawa, "The History of Religions in America," in The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology, ed. Mircea Eliade and Kitagawa (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 1-30; and Sydney E. Ahlstrom, The American Protestant Encounter with World Religions (Beloit, Wisconsin: Beloit College, 1962).

history of the school elective courses were offered alongside those prescribed. President Strong himself had long opposed the elective system, but showed that he could change his mind--even at the age of sixty-eight. The adoption of the elective plan was essentially a deed of the liberal generation. Greater elasticity for the pursuance of particular interests and the introduction of new ideas was now provided in the curriculum itself, and so it remained through the last years of Strong's administration.

II

We have seen something of how the rise of religious liberalism at Rochester affected the course of studies. President Strong's conception of theological education made such change probable as well as possible. But there was another matter of crucial importance that also facilitated change--the growing economic independence of the seminary. In the first chapter we noticed that the seminary's founders had expressed an intention to secure a solid financial undergirding for the work of the school, which meant that from the first the institution was committed to travel two roads, the road of commerce with the churches and the road to independent endowment. We noted, furthermore, that in its origin the school was legally independent of the churches, being sponsored not by an ecclesiastical body but by a private corporation that existed only for the school's support. The financial situation in those early years was often discouraging, yet by the time of President Robinson's resignation in 1872, the school's economic fortune was already much improved. This development did not slacken, but continued apace during the administration of President Strong. When he became the school's president in 1872, it was in debt, meagerly equipped, inadequately housed, and perpetually operating at a deficit. At the time of his retirement it was recognized by many that

the financial burden under which he had toiled had at times been "a crushing one," but that he had borne the burden well and had "achieved the victory." This was due largely to the fact that Strong was "a man whose character and personality quickly won the confidence of men of financial standing." For that reason "it was not difficult for him to secure many . . . earnest and substantial laymen for the Board of Trustees."[1]

Two such men were John B. Trevor of Yonkers, New York, and John J. Jones of Orange, New Jersey. Mr. Trevor, long-time trustee and president of the Baptist Union from 1878 to 1886, "again and again . . . cleared off [the] annually recurring deficit" and contributed across the years better than $200,000 to the school.[2] Mr. Jones, on the other hand, was not a regular donor but at his death in 1905 bequeathed $560,000 for scholarships and current expenses--the largest single gift in the history of the school.[3] Certainly, however, the most notable of those "earnest and substantial laymen" whose aid President Strong secured was none other than Mr. John D. Rockefeller himself. The two were already friends when Strong returned to the seminary in 1872, Rockefeller having been one of Strong's parishioners in Cleveland. In subsequent years the seminary president was frequently a house guest of the Rockefellers at Cleveland or New York City. The two families toured Europe together for three months in 1888. In the same year Strong dedicated his Philosophy and Religion to Rockefeller, calling him "the friend and helper of every good

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[1]The Record (May, 1912), 5.

[2]Cf. Strong, Historical Discourse, pp. 36-37.

[3]Cf. Annual Report of the Union, 1905, p. 35; ibid., 1906, p. 35.

cause"--this at a time when the business tycoon was already becoming a prominent symbol of abusive money power! Rockefeller had provided the funds for the book's publication. The next year after these events--that is, 1889--Strong's son, Charles, took Rockefeller's daughter, Elizabeth, to be his wife.[1] So the ties of friendship and of family were very close.

Interestingly enough, Rockefeller never became a trustee of the seminary, though he was a vice-president of the Baptist Union from 1879 to 1886, and thereafter its president until 1892. In 1879 he had provided the principal funds for the erection of a building which bore his name, an edifice which served for a quarter of a century as the main academic quarters for the school. At the dedication of that hall President Strong reminded his audience--which included Mr. Rockefeller--that he who gives to the seminary "gives to God, and puts his hand to a work that is sure to triumph." Strong was not just being grateful for past deeds and present accomplishments, however; he was looking ahead to a program of theological education that "would require indeed a large sum of money." And he was optimistic, for he thought that he saw

> a foregleam of the dawn, a sign of the coming of that final day when "the rebuke of God's people"--the poverty and weakness and contempt under which his cause has suffered--shall be taken away and the riches of the world shall be poured into the treasury of the Redeemer.[2]

Very likely the pious John D. received a knowing look with the utterance of these words.

Cowper once said, "the parson knows enough who knows a duke." And Strong thought that in Rockefeller he knew a duke--a duke with dollars. In fact, there is no doubt but that by 1888 and 1889, with all the traveling

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[1]Cf. Allan Nevins, John D. Rockefeller (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), II, pp. 178, 198.

[2]Strong, Philosophy and Religion, p. 313.

and dedicating of books and giving and receiving in marriage, Strong was doing his best to sell his friend on a scheme of educational philanthropy of really grand proportions. What Strong had in mind was a Baptist super-university for New York City--to which he could move his seminary--and he looked to Mr. Rockefeller as the chief potential benefactor for his dream. Rockefeller latched on to the dream and gave his money to it--but in Chicago, not New York. And it was not Strong, but a man whom he had introduced to Rockefeller--William Rainey Harper (1856-1906)--who was chosen to turn Rockefeller dollars into university scholars. Thus, when the University of Chicago was founded, Strong, who had given birth to the idea, suffered one of the profound disappointments of his life.[1]

Strong's failure in regard to the university did not deter him, however, from seeking further aid from Mr. Rockefeller for the seminary. And he was not unsuccessful. After the death of Mr. Trevor, Rockefeller customarily picked up the tab for what amounted to a regular annual deficit in operating expenses. And in 1900 he pledged on a matching basis $150,000 for endowment purposes, a pledge which he fulfilled, then repeated in 1905--in addition to other gifts along the way. In all he contributed during Strong's administration better than half-a-million dollars to the seminary,[2] so that he was indeed one of the leading benefactors of the school. Furthermore, he was always at least potentially available to contribute considerably more than he did. Thus, perhaps

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[1]Cf. T. W. Goospeed, A History of the University of Chicago (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), pp. 34ff; and Moehlman, "How the Baptist Super-University Planned for New York City Was Built in Chicago," CRDS Bulletin, XI (February, 1939), 119-34.

[2]Data on Rockefeller's benefactions to the Rochester Seminary has been compiled by Mr. Edward C. Starr and is on file in the library of the American Baptist Historical Society.

more than any other outsider, Mr. Rockefeller was in a position to make demands upon the school if he chose to do so, but evidently he never did. He became identified with and was in fact an embodiment of the gospel of wealth. In a sense, then, the gospel of wealth met the social gospel at Rochester. Walter Rauschenbusch was already known for his stern indictment of laissez-faire economics and the money-powers[1] when he was invited to join the seminary faculty; yet Mr. Rockefeller approved his appointment.[2] Rauschenbusch never publicly rebuked Rockefeller, though his friend, Washington Gladden, elder statesman of the social gospel, did.[3] It was President Strong however, who was playing both ends against the middle--receiving from the gospel of wealth to support the social gospel. There is no indication that Rockefeller ever complained of this, and he certainly helped the school attain that kind of economic independence that would make it immune to the pressures of his or any other donor's whims.

Strong once recalled that, at its origin, the seminary had been "wholly without invested funds, and . . . dependent upon the churches" to meet its economic requirements.[4] But this situation changed in time. By 1872, when Strong assumed his position at the school, the value of productive investments was $113,750; forty years later, when he retired, the

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[1]E.g., "On Monopolies," Proceedings of the Baptist Congress, 1889, pp. 55-61; "The Church and Money Power," ibid., 1893, pp. 10-17; and "How Rich Have I a Right to Be?" The Examiner (May 10, 1894), 1.

[2]Minutes of the Executive Committee, June 14, 1897.

[3]The occasion for Gladden's attack was the receipt by a Congregationalist mission board in 1905 of $100,000 from Mr. Rockefeller. Out of the ensuing controversy came the phrase, "tainted money." Cf. Nevins, John D. Rockefeller, II, pp. 534-54.

[4]Strong, Historical Discourse, p. 35.

value was $1,733,000--the increase was better than fifteenfold. In the same four decades the total assets of the institution rose from $240,000 to $2,168,000, while annual expenses went from $31,407 to $71,918. Thus, investments and total assets considerably outstripped the actual increase in expenses. The really remarkable advance in productive assets occurred in the first six years of the twentieth century, when the endowment was expanded by approximately $1,000,000, very largely as the result of a quite effective fund-raising drive led by J. W. A. Stewart, who was at the time still pastor of Rochester's First Baptist Church.[1] The effect of the resultant enlargement of the productive assets was an almost immediate easing of the financial tension in which the school had always lived. All indebtedness was wiped out in 1903, and the annually recurring deficit became a thing of the past by 1905. In 1907, Alvah Strong Hall, a handsome and commodious building named for A. H. Strong's father was erected, and numerous improvements were made to the other property--all debt-free.[2]

Thus, by the time of Strong's retirement, the seminary was adequately housed, current expenses were well underwritten, and student scholarship aid was assured. Perhaps the most dramatic way of showing what happened in a financial way at the seminary is to review the change in the ratio of investment income to total income. For 1871-72, the final year of Robinson's presidency, 22.5 per cent of the school's total income was provided through investments. During Strong's term of office this percentage

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[1]Cf. RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 32.

[2]The financial details given here and throughout this section are drawn from a study of the regular reports of the treasurer and seminary president in the Annual Report of the Union for each year from 1872 through 1912. Most of the cost of Alvah Strong Hall was contributed by Henry A. Strong, brother to President Strong. It will be remembered that Alvah Strong was one of the school's founders.

steadily increased, until by the end of the century slightly more than half the total annual receipts came from investments. Then, for the next five years there was what can only be regarded as a fantastic growth in investment income, providing by 1904-05, 83.8 per cent of the total receipts. Thereafter a gradual development continued, so that for Strong's final year investments accounted for considerably better than nine out of every ten dollars received by the school (92.9 per cent). Evidently Strong had found it inconvenient for the seminary to be poor and had set out to do something about it. And what he did was to make the school financially independent--just as the liberal generation was coming into its own.

Of course, as he took the seminary along the road to economic security, Strong did not take his eye off that other road, the road to the churches. He was never unmindful of how prosperity might affect the school's relation to the churches. In his 1906 report to the trustees, in the context of discussing the newly acquired financial well-being of the school, he reported that "our average [annual] receipts from the churches and from individuals have been $7,000 a year." He admitted that such contributions could now be expected to diminish somewhat, though he hoped a level of $5,000 per year from such sources could be maintained. Then he added, "It will be well for both churches and individuals still to be instructed and solicited to give to ministerial education, and so to be kept in touch with the work of the seminary."[1] As for the income which he feared the seminary might lose--along with the mutually sympathetic contact

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[1]Annual Report of the Union, 1906, p. 37. Cf. a similar statement made by Strong in his final year in the Annual Catalogue, 1911-12, pp. 83-84.

such income represented--there was from 1906 to 1912 a gradual decline, thought receipts from churches and individuals averaged better than $6000 per year and never fell below $5000. How such income came in after 1912 will be dealt with in chapter six.

III

A review of the financial situation of the seminary necessarily led to a discussion of the relation of the school to the churches. There were also other links between the school and churches, one of which was the "Examining Committee." Quite early at Rochester it had become customary to have at the close of each academic year a public oral examination of the graduating seniors. This examination was conducted by a committee selected by and responsible to the Board of Trustees. The committee generally was made up of pastors of Baptist churches in New York and neighboring states, though occasionally a college professor was included. A. H. Strong had himself been a member of the committee during his years in Cleveland. The responsibility of this perennial body was, as put by the 1886 committee, to assist the seminary "both by way of suggestion and by keeping it in vital contact with the churches."[1] A perusal of the committee reports, which were published from time to time,[2] indicates that committee members were familiar with what was going on at the school and took quite seriously their own responsibility. There is no way of measuring the precise value of the Examining Committee, though the very existence of such formal tie between the seminary and the churches it meant to

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[1] Annual Report of the Union, 1886, p. 45.

[2] During Strong's administration reports from the Examining Committee appeared in the Annual Report of the Union, in 1874, 1876-87, and 1893-1902.

serve certainly made for a happier and healthier relationship. If one effect was to give the work of the seminary a churchly character and common touch, the churches were also at the same time made aware of changes in emphasis at the school, so that at least those churches directly involved could not come up suddenly surprised by developments at the seminary. Perhaps most regrettable is the fact that the committee was not more representative, including laymen as well as ordained ministers. Of chief importance, however, is the fact that the committee did exist and did function throughout the whole of Strong's term of office. Probably not a few senior students regretted that this interchange was done chiefly at their expense.

In the official faculty-trustee relationship may be discerned yet another line of communication between the school and the churches. This relationship was formally spelled out in the "Laws" of the seminary adopted in 1882. Among the several provisions, which included one requiring each faculty member to be a Baptist, was the following:

> Each professor or instructor shall submit to the Board, if required, a full statement of his course and method of instruction and shall so far modify the same as the Board may direct.[1]

There is no evidence, however, in the minutes of the Board or of the Executive Committee of the Board that this ruling was ever invoked, probably in part at least because of the provision of the next article of the Laws:

> Each professor or instructor shall, at the end of the year, make to the Board in writing, a full report of his instruction for the year; and a comprehensive report on the internal state and affairs of the Seminary shall be submitted by the President.[2]

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[1] "Laws of the Rochester Theological Seminary" (1882), Section I, Article 10.

[2] Ibid., Article 11.

Thus the trustees were regularly learning directly from the faculty what was being done in the classroom and how it was being done, and this they could put in the context of the president's more general report.

Two things can be noted about these required reports as especially important in the communication of the mind of the seminary to the churches, First, the reports--of all the faculty as well as the president--were printed in full every year in the Annual Report of the Union. Thus, the words of each faculty member interpreting his own work were available for all to see. At least this was true up to 1908, when for the first time faculty reports were not printed. Thereafter--that is, for the last five years of Strong's term--only the reports of the president, dean, and librarian were published, a change which was probably made by common consent but which, nevertheless, severed one of the lines of contact with the churches. A second noteworthy aspect of these reports is the frankness with which they were made. The printed reports became a sort of faculty forum on theological education at Rochester, for here the professors stated as persuasively as possible in the context of describing their own actual work their various schemes for changing and altering the established patterns at the school. And they certainly did not always agree, nor did they, in stating a case for reform of the institution, hesitate to disagree even with the president. For example, adoption of the elective system, which Strong so long opposed, was for years urged by members of the faculty in their annual reports. In this way, faculty ideas were kept before not only the trustees but any interested persons who cared to look. But, as we have seen, this particular avenue of commerce with the churches was closed before the end of Strong's administration. It was not, of course

closed altogether, for the very full report of the president continued to be published. It is probably too much, however, to expect one man faithfully and adequately to express the mind of so diverse a body as the faculty with which Strong and his successors labored.

The Rochester faculty did not really lose its voice when the printed faculty reports were discontinued, for by this time The Record had been launched, and this new publication proved to be much more effective for communication with a larger audience than the previous "official" reports could ever have been. In the lead editorial of the first issue, editor John Henry Mason stated that The Record was intended to serve as a medium between the seminary and "its friends in all parts of America and throughout the world," so that those on "the circumference" of the school's circle of friends might know "what the men at the center are doing." He then referred to the paper as "simply a record of the passing events of Seminary life," but hastened to add that it was really intended to be "something more than a record. We propose," he said

> also to serve as a herald calling to yet larger things. We shall chronicle the needs of the seminary yet outstanding as well as the needs which have just been supplied. . . .
>
> The Record will be honest. It will endeavor to see things precisely as they are and to register them accordingly. It will not hesitate to point out in its editorial columns the defects existing in the modern theological seminary at large, and in our own seminary in particular. And it will criticise Rochester more frankly than it will criticize our sister institutions.[1]

The paper, through its years, never had any less freedom than here stated. So, largely because of The Record, which in 1912 was incorporated into the Bulletin, the record at Rochester is plain from 1906 to the merger with Colgate in 1928. The new Colgate Rochester Divinity School continued with

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[1]The Record (June, 1906), 1.

a similar publication which persists to the present. The point is, of course, that the churches and the churchmen who desired to know about the seminary at Rochester had only to look.

The Examining Committee, the printed faculty reports, and The Record provided public channels of the ideas of the school to the churches, but there were also the more private lines of communication via the trustees. Of course, as noted in the first chapter, the trustees did not provide an official link to the churches, because the sponsoring body of the school was not really an ecclesiastical body. But, in their unofficial capacity, the trustees did represent opinion in the churches, which means that, when they were sympathetic with the work of the school, informed church opinion was sympathetic. And, indeed, the Rochester trustees were sympathetic; in fact, as President Strong often mentioned in his last years at the seminary, the trustees had eschewed discord, worked harmoniously, and "furthered every plan . . . for the prosperity and progress of the institution."[1]

The relation of the school to the churches was of perennial concern to Strong, but at no time did he express this concern more clearly or succinctly than in the following words taken from an address given during that final week before he laid aside the mantle of responsibility he had worn for forty years:

> The seminary is the child and yet the teacher of the churches. . . . The churches [early] took the seminary to their hearts, gave to it of their substance, looked to it for their ministers, regarded it as a guardian of the faith and practice of the gospel.
>
> I have tried to keep in touch with the churches and to make the seminary useful to them. In an age of doubt and unrest I have endeavored to hold the seminary true to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and to commit the truth to faithful men

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[1] Annual Report of the Union, 1912, p. 34. Cf. Historical Discourse, p. 43; Annual Report of the Union, 1908, p. 35.

> who should be able to teach others also. . . .
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> It will be a sad day for the seminary if it should lose the affection and support of the churches. It needs their watchcare, lest it go astray in its teaching; it needs their prayers that new recruits may come to it for the ministry; it needs their financial aid in providing new and better instruction adapted to the new times in which we live. . . . In standing by the seminary you are standing by the future interests of the church, and no one of us can put his life to better account than to serve the church of God which he has redeemed. . . . With all my heart I thank you . . . and give you as my closing sentiment: THE CHURCH AND THE SEMINARY, NOW AND FOREVER, ONE AND INSEPARABLE.[1]

Such a statement needs no commentary beyond calling attention to the fact that Strong was desiring something which, under the circumstances, was well-nigh unattainable. For the school was by its constitution officially not responsible directly to the churches or under their authority. And, now, thanks to his leadership, it was also financially independent of them. It still looked to them for its students and intended to return to them its graduates. But, beyond that, the notion that the Rochester Seminary was "one and inseparable" with the churches was, at best, only an ideal--and an ideal devoid of any formal means for making it effectual.

The dilemma which Strong faced was by no means altogether his own doing, but was built into the school from its origin and was inseparable from the kind of ecclesiology that had produced the school. Strong did not originate but accepted the ecclesiological pattern of which the school was a part, but by doing so well the task that had been set before him in 1872--that is, by getting together a thinking faculty who would attract thinking students, and by insuring an adequate economic base for their work--by doing all of this and by doing it very well indeed, Strong

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[1] The Record (May, 1912), 11.

demonstrated perhaps better than he knew the inadequacies of that ecclesiology which had given birth to the seminary. If the theological school could be regarded as only a business concern fulfilling a business function, then the wholly independent status of the school would never be a thing to question. Obviously however, Strong thought that the business of teaching theology and of educating men for the Christian ministry was not just business in general, but was integrally linked with the life and work of the churches. But an ecclesiology in which the theological seminary was seen to participate in the very nature of the church was absent at Rochester, as probably in Baptist life generally at the time. That is, even though the task of educating the ministry might, as with Strong, be regarded as by no means merely a business function, the Rochester Seminary was by its constitution chiefly, if not only, a business concern. If the theological seminary really was engaged in an ecclesiastical task--the education of the church's ministry--there existed among the Baptists no ecclesiology which adequately took this into account and in some way defined the responsibility of school and congregation within the denomination. Monadic congregationalism, especially if oriented toward individualism--as among the Baptists of Strong's time generally--has little place for and, therefore, can hardly be reconciled with a recognition of the ecclesial character of such non-congregational entities as the theological seminary. Corresponding to this inadequate ecclesiology, there was no denominational structure in which the theological school really had suitable place.

What the remarkable successes of President Strong's administration demonstrate is that, given the situation at Rochester, a close bond between school and church could be maintained only by the force of a reciprocating sympathetic interest on both sides. And there is no reason to think that

there was ever anything other than this sort of mutual interest during the four decades of Strong's leadership. Especially was this true of the relation to the churches closest at hand--those in the city of Rochester itself. Strong recognized that "apart from the interest and liberality of the Rochester churches, the seminary never would have been founded and it never could have been sustained." And he asked rhetorically: "May I not claim that through the seminary the influence of Rochester churches has gone out through all the world? And have not the churches profited by the existence of the seminary among them?"[1] Plainly the relation of the school to the churches was a burning question in the mind of A. H. Strong as he stepped down from the presidency of the seminary. Plainly, too, this was so at least partly because of his concern for doctrinal orthodoxy, a concern which was never minor with him but which in his last years at the seminary came more and more to dominate this thinking. To this theme we now turn for a closer examination.

IV

In that retirement address quoted above Strong claimed that he had "endeavored to hold the seminary true to the faith once for all delivered to the saints," and he pled for the "watchcare" of the churches lest the school "go astray in its teaching."[2] He was saying, in other words, that he hoped the school would in the future strive for orthodoxy as he had striven in the past. Reference was earlier made to three phases in the thought of President Strong, and in the second chapter attention was devoted to the first two phases--his original rationalistic theology, which provided

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[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid.

the framework for his ideas, and the positive and progressive stage, which was characterized by his inclusive and expansive christological doctrine. The first of these was his received orthodoxy, and the second, because of the linking of new insights with traditional expressions, was his progressive or expansive orthodoxy. This is to suggest that Strong was never anything other than deliberately orthodox--that is, deliberately true to traditional catholic Christian theology. But in the final years of his tenure as professor and president he became more and more preoccupied with orthodoxy--with respect both to himself and to the school. And it is this increasing preoccupation with orthodoxy which marks the gradual shift from the positiveness of his most creative period to the negative and restrictive characteristics of the third, chiefly defensive phase of his thought. Where he had been open, he began to close, though he never surrendered the main theological ground gained in his middle and creative period, as is evidenced by the last of his published works.[1] He did, however lose something of the joy of creativity and finally became openly polemical of that religious liberalism which he had done so much explicitly and implicitly to foster. This aspect of his thought we will examine more closely in chapter six. For now, our concern is Strong's concern with orthodoxy.

Those who were closest to the seminary through the whole of Strong's administration--e.g., trustees, the Examining Committee, officers of the Baptist Union, alumni--such persons usually regarded the school as essentially orthodox and conservative,[2] a judgment in which those liberals who made

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[1] What Shall I Believe? (1922).

[2] Cf. Annual Report of the Union, 1880, p. 37; ibid., 1885, pp. 44-45; ibid., 1906, pp. 25-26; and The Record (May, 1909), 12. Cf. also A. H. Newman, "Recent Changes in the Theology of Baptists," American Journal of Theology, X (October, 1906), 605.

up the faculty after Strong's retirement whole-heartedly concurred.[1] Things sometimes appeared differently, however, to students who came to the school from backgrounds more narrowly restrictive. In 1908 one such student thought would-be ministers ill-advised to come to Rochester if not already "well grounded in the fundamentals."[2] Interestingly enough, Strong sometimes felt constrained--as, for instance, in his 1898 report to the trustees--to defend himself and the school against the accusation "of being too narrowly conservative in doctrine." In that report he affirmed his loyalty to certain traditional doctrines, and then continued:

> But I would have it also known to all that we welcome light . . . from every quarter, and recognize a book of nature through which God reveals himself as well as a book of Scripture, although the Scripture, properly understood and interpreted, is our final court of appeal. What Scripture is, and how the Scripture was composed and put together, is a matter of history, and to investigate these matters fully is a duty to truth and to God. There is truth to be discovered as well as truth to be taught, and I understand that I and my colleagues in our faculty are expected to bring forth from our treasure things new as well as things old, it being always acknowledged that we teach nothing which contradicts the essential faith of our churches. . . . Faith and freedom have gone together.[3]

Thus Strong responded to the charge that the seminary was too conservative by asserting that the kind of conservatism articulated at the school was significantly tempered by the liberal attitude. This was essentially the approach of his own progressive orthodoxy, though when he made the above statement he was referring not to himself alone but to the whole faculty. At that time, of course, he was still surrounded by the other members of the Big Five, whom in 1900 he delighted to include along

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[1]Interview with Glenn B. Ewell, February 26, 1964.

[2]Letter of W. T. Conner to B. H. Carroll, September, 1908; quoted in S. Newman, W. T. Conner, p. 90. Conner later admitted that, as a result of his time at Rochester, "my sympathies were broader and more nearly universal." Ibid., p. 96.

[3]Annual Report of the Union, 1898, pp. 38-39. Cf. ibid., 1902, pp. 33-34; and ibid., 1904, p. 35.

with their predecessors as men who had never compromised the Christian faith.[1] Through the opening years of the twentieth century Strong became increasingly conscious of the passing of the old order. In 1906 he claimed that the favor of the churches had been kept because "we have not apostatized from the faith. . . . Let others teach as they will," he said, "we propose to walk in the old paths and to hand down to our successors the old gospel."[2] From about this time on, his annual reports and commencement addresses bear more and more the marks of an old man cognizant that his own days are numbered and that, if the Christian faith as he understood it was to be perpetuated, every move must be executed carefully toward that end.

Of the several tactics employed to perpetuate his own orthodoxy, undoubtedly the most important to him was the publication in 1907 and following of the final edition of the Systematic Theology, the preface of which contained his "test" of orthodoxy--"Do we pray to Jesus?"[3]--as well as his warning that "we seem upon the verge of a second Unitarian defection." He sent forth "this revised and enlarged edition" of his work, he said,

> in the hope that its publication may do something to stem this fast advancing tide, and to confirm the faith of God's elect. . . . When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him. I would do my part in raising up such a standard.[4]

Already we have noted that this sort of language repelled men of liberal

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[1]Cf. Historical Discourse, p. 46.

[2]Annual Report of the Union, 1906, pp. 41-42.

[3]Systematic Theology, p. viii. Strong especially looked with favor upon Rauschenbusch because the latter could pass this test.

[4]Ibid., pp. ix-x.

spirit while it attracted reactionary conservatives who otherwise evaded or misunderstood those progressive themes which had become central for Strong through his creative period. Those who most applauded his work did not really rally round the standard he raised. But the point here is that he deliberately gave the final edition of his major work to the theological world as a standard for orthodoxy.

Inside the front cover of that last edition of the Systematic Theology, beyond the title-page, on the dedication page appear the following words: Christo Deo Salvatori--"to Christ our God and Savior." These words summed up Strong's central doctrine, what we have called his cosmic christology. And now he set these words in the vestibule of his major work. But with these words he did more than that: in 1907 Alvah Strong Hall was under construction, and President Strong was not one to miss an opportunity. His report to the trustees for that year contains the following:

> I have put on the forefront of the new hall the motto 'Christo Deo Salvatori'. . . . I have desired that the building might forever be recognized as a testimony to our fundamental beliefs. This motto is therefore engraved upon the shield which crowns the central portion of the edifice. The shield is the shield of faith of which Paul speaks. So we erect our standard on the outer wall, and fling our banner so that all men may see it. I shall be glad if the Board of Trustees will sanction my act by adopting this inscription as the motto of the seminary. In this day when so many ministers and institutions are swinging off from the old faith in the deity and atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, it will do something to tone up public sentiment, if we will in this way commit ourselves to a confession of faith in Him.[1]

The trustees took up Strong's suggestion and adopted his Latin phrase as the official motto of the seminary,[2] and the words have stayed with the school ever since.[3] At very least, in 1912 when Strong stepped down he

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[1]Annual Report of the Union, 1907, pp. 31-32.

[2]Minutes of the Board of Trustees, May 7, 1907.

[3]Shortly after the 1928 formation of the CRDS, the present handsome Gothic structures that command the crest of a hill at the south edge of the

could have the comfort of knowing that to the school he had given a motto--and there it was, in stone, for all to see. Orthodoxy in stone!

V

So Strong sent forth his enlarged Systematic Theology and so he gave to the Rochester Seminary a motto--both as standards for orthodoxy. But there was one more move to enshrine and perpetuate his own orthodoxy that for sheer audacity surpasses anything else the man did in all of his better than fourscore years. In order best to understand what happened and what was involved we must review something of the characteristics of President Strong's two sons and the relation of those sons to their father. The elder son was Charles Augustus Strong (1862-1940),[1] who, in the course of his days, acquired a respectable prominence as a philosopher and psychologist. President Strong early recognized and did all he could to cultivate the lad's mental powers. One can imagine that Charles was the apple of his father's eye and that, by the time the boy was in his late teens, his

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city of Rochester were erected; over the front entry on the shield of faith were inscribed the words Christo Deo Salvatori. The original stone shield on Alvah Strong Hall has its own very different history, for that edifice on Alexander Street just south of East Avenue is no longer a part of the seminary but is now an apartment building. It would be interesting to know how many residents of that hall now pause to ponder at that "testimony to our fundamental beliefs" engraved as a "standard" and flung as a "banner" above their entryway. One wonders to this day if those words inscribed in stone "do something to tone up public sentiment."

[1]Born at Haverhill, Massachusetts, November 28, 1862. Studied at Gütersloh Gymnasium, Germany, 1881-83; B.A., University of Rochester, 1884, and Harvard, 1885. Studied at RTS, 1885-86; at Berlin, 1886-87. Instructor in philosophy, Cornell University, 1887-89; in Europe, 1889-90; docent in psychology, Clark University, 1890-92; associate professor of psychology, University of Chicago, 1892-95; lecturer in psychology, Columbia University, 1895-1903, and professor, 1903-12. Resident of Europe, chiefly Fiesole, Italy, 1913-40; engaged in literary work. Died at Fiesole, January 24, 1940. Cf. D. M. Cory, "Charles Augustus Strong," Dictionary of American Biography, XXII, p. 639.

father was already having grand visions of raising up a noble theologian to follow in his own stead. With far better than average academic preparation behind him, Charles went off to Harvard; there he fell under the influence of William James, and there he made a friendship which would be lifelong--with fellow student George Santayana--a friendship which adequately to describe would be quite a story in itself.[1]

When in 1885 Charles returned to Rochester to take up theological studies at his father's school, he was already entertaining serious doubts as to the adequacy of the Christian faith in the face of the new day to which he had come. At just this time his father was about to publish the first edition of the Systematic Theology, and he asked his son's assistance. Charles later told what happened:

> In correcting the proofs of my father's work on theology I was so repelled by the unnaturalness of the suppositions which theologians made in order to reconcile the conflicting stories in the Gospels, that the foundations of my belief in Christianity began to crumble and I could not become a minister myself as I had intended. . . . I chose philosophy as a calling.[2]

President Strong had done his utmost to see that Charles received the requisite education to be the next generation's theologian, but somehow things went wrong and young Charles lost his Christian faith. The course of Charles' life thereafter--especially the direction of his intellectual life--was generally a disappointment to his father, the single exception being Charles' marriage; it was he who took Bessie Rockefeller as his bride in 1889.

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[1]For Santayana's interesting account of the friendship, cf. his Persons and Places: Background of My Life (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), pp. 249-53.

[2]Charles Strong, "Nature and Mind," in Contemporary American Philosophy: Personal Statements, ed. G. P. Adams and W. P. Montague (New York: Macmillan, 1930), II, p. 313.

Charles Strong became a professor and taught at several places, most notably and for the longest period at Columbia University. But he very early retired to Europe--in 1913 at the age of fifty, only one year after his father had stepped down at the age of seventy-seven. In Europe Charles lived as a gentlemanly, sometimes peripatetic scholar, frequently and at length entertaining Santayana in exchange for conversations which often seemed interminable and boring to the latter, who nevertheless kept coming back for the hospitality. Charles wrote several philosophico-psychological works.[1] It is not difficult, however, to see why he never won any literary prizes. In his final volume, which he called A Creed for Sceptics (1936), he summed up his denial of "traditional religion" and affirmed his faith in man. So the first-born son of A. H. Strong, the son in whom he had placed his hope, rejected the faith of his father and ended up a sceptic. Father and son did not lose touch with one another, but corresponded often about intellectual as well as filial matters, and the earliest of the son's works is three times referred to or quoted in the father's major work.[2] Our story, however, would be but an unfinished part without the introduction of one other fact, namely that in 1891, "on account of his divergence from the views of the church with regard to essential points of doctrine," Charles Strong was excommunicated from the First Baptist Church of Rochester. The record says that this was done "at his own request,"[3] which probably is precisely correct. But the church's

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[1] Why the Mind Has a Body (1903); The Origin of Consciousness (1918); A Theory of Knowledge (1923); Essays on the Natural Origins of the Mind (1930).

[2] Systematic Theology, pp. 97, 98, 281.

[3] "Church Records," First Baptist Church, Rochester, New York, November 4, 1891.

decision was also made with the approval of the father, who later reported he had "even urged its action."[1] Thus the one-time would-be theologian was excommunicated from the church of his father.

The younger son, the son who remained at home in the household of his father's faith, was John Henry Strong (1866-1960), to whom we already have been introduced. John had graduated from Harvard and the Rochester Seminary, had been a pastor for nine years, and had studied for a year at Berlin and Marburg before joining the faculty of his father's seminary in 1904 as professor of New Testament interpretation. In the first of his reports to the seminary trustees, John noted that he had "especially emphasized the importance of that elemental word-study which is the alphabet of the students' biblical knowledge."[2] This sentence very well sums up in his own words the approach that characterized his teaching. At a time when biblical scholarship was wrestling with the conclusions of the higher criticism and was assessing the adequacy of that whole approach, and when others were introducing their students to the broad vistas of Bible-paragraphs and books, of movements and of ideas, John Strong persisted in the minutiae of philological study. This is not to suggest that what he was doing was not important; it is to suggest that he was studiously avoiding the critical questions of the biblical scholarship of his time, avoiding them by doing well something which supposedly no one would question. Former students remember that, in his survey course, the study of the life and teachings of Jesus was never carried chronologically beyond the beginning of Passion Week. It was thought by the students that the professor

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[1] Ibid., July 26, 1916.

[2] Annual Report of the Union, 1905, pp. 43-44.

preferred to end the course somewhat short of full coverage of the subject because he was unwilling to face inquiring students on the difficult questions regarding the resurrection appearances of Jesus.[1]

It would be too much to say that John Strong was a biblical literalist who followed a proof-text approach. But there is little evidence that he ever moved much beyond such an approach either to try to answer or to appropriate the conclusions of critical biblical scholarship available to him. His most adequate treatment of such questions was in a 1909 address in which he tipped his hat to the higher criticism, indicated in a general way something of the limitations of taking that approach exclusively, and pled for an "intuitive" interpretation of the Bible--by which apparently he meant interpretation from a confessional perspective.[2] He might have made a significant contribution to the scholarship of his time had he worked out this insight more fully in the context of a bold acceptance of the assured results of the higher criticism. It was more typical of him, however, to overlook critical questions as if they did not exist and to be preachy--i.e., to write or speak in a sermonic style.[3] Little wonder, then, that many of the students, not to mention his colleagues on the faculty, did not respect John Strong as a scholar--whatever else they thought of the man. As one student put it: "Well, to go from Rauschenbusch's class to John Strong's was certainly not to go upstairs."

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[1]This information, as well as other here given but not otherwise documented, was furnished in interviews with several persons, some of whom desire to remain anonymous. In fairness to them, therefore, I refrain from mentioning the names of any of the persons interviewed regarding John Strong.

[2]"The Intuitions and the Bible," The Record (May, 1909), 5-6.

[3]E.g., "The Great Commission: Does It Merit the Name?," Biblical World, XXIX (May, 1907), 352-56; and "The Efficient Christian Life," Proceedings of the Baptist Congress, 1912, pp. 176-83.

The secret to John Strong's place on the seminary faculty can be discerned in his own words from an address made in 1909. Referring to the seminary he said, "We believe in knowledge." He elaborated this a bit, then hastened to add that "knowledge is not everything. Knowledge is not a substitute for piety. Knowledge and piety are the twin-blades . . . that make the shears cut." Then he proceeded to show how at the seminary, as he conceived it, piety simply overwhelmed intellectual difficulties and a warm evangelical faith doused doubt. "And this," he said, referring to piety, "is the side of seminary life in which I am most interested."[1] Of the truth of that assessment of his own place at the seminary there can hardly be any question. He was there primarily because of his deep piety; this trait was widely recognized and generally admired in him.[2] Seemingly, President Strong's own personality was split between his two sons, with Charles becoming the man of learning and John the man of faith. It is doubtful however, whether either son exemplified anything like the full measure of either of those qualities as held together in the single personality of their father. Charles and John fairly well demonstrate what happens when the separation occurs: learning tends toward scepticism and piety ends up in sentimentalism. As for John at the seminary, it is plain that his contribution was what he could bring forth from the wellsprings of his piety. The fact is, however, that in this place at this time the students were less and less attracted to piety without learning.

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[1]"What Rochester Stands For," The Record (May, 1909), 16-17.

[2]For Rauschenbusch's assessment of John Strong along such lines, cf. RTS Bulletin (May, 1914), 8-10.

They might take learning without piety, but hardly the reverse. For those who might be interested, such piety was too easily accessible elsewhere.

President Strong had originally set his hope in the elder son, Charles. That hope frustrated, he made the logical move and turned to John. When in 1904 he nominated John for election to the faculty, he admitted that he was "looking out for the future," and assured the trustees that John's "coming among us . . . will . . . do much to ensure the future religious interests of the seminary."[1] It is not certain whether thus early—in 1904—President Strong was already grooming his younger son to succeed him in the president's chair, but indeed before long he could have announced that intention with clarity, for in those last years father and son labored together toward this common goal.

There were a number of indications of what was happening. For example, John Strong began more and more, after about 1907, to represent the seminary or to speak in its behalf at denominational meetings, at alumni gatherings, and at various public assemblies. In most schools it would not be considered unusual at all for a faculty member to be his institution's official representative on such occasions, but at Rochester across the years President Strong had almost exclusively reserved those honors for himself. Now the lot was falling to John Strong, and he was not missing the opportunity to speak on such subjects as "What Rochester Stands For."[2] Back home in Rochester other things were happening, which were not lost on perceptive observers. It will be remembered that President

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[1] Annual Report of the Union, 1904, p. 35.

[2] Cf. The Record (May, 1909), 16-17.

Strong's home was a mecca for the social life not only for the seminary but also for the local intelligentsia and would-be aristocracy. For all the entertaining that he did President Strong had always relied upon his wife, who was a charming hostess. But in these last years, Mrs. Strong became ill and was unable to meet the public, whereupon the president secured the constant assistance of his daughter-in-law. Thus John's wife became, for practical purposes, the official hostess of the seminary, a position not unimportant in that day. It may seem a mere accident, but it is true that, if John was being fitted out for the presidency, his wife was being prepared to stand by him in the manner to which friends of the school had become accustomed.

President Strong's resignation was presented to the trustees a full year ahead of the effective date, so that, as he put it, there would be "ample time to consult as to the choice of a fit successor." He added: "My chief concern is that what work I have done should not be undone in the years that follow." And to show that he was not referring to buildings and endowments, he said: "I trust that the theology taught here may always be the evangelical theology of Jesus and Paul."[1] The critical question about the "theology of Jesus and Paul" aside, it is plain enought that the theology Strong had in mind for the continuing life of the school was none other than his own. He would have his own developed doctrine, which was not identical to his original received orthodoxy, become the received orthodoxy of the next generation. And, by this time, it was rather generally known around the school that his last, best hope for perpetuating that orthodoxy resided in his son, John. "There comes one after me," he might have said, "who is not greater than I, and his name is John."

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[1]Annual Report of the Union, 1911, p. 38.

It is not now possible to say with certainty exactly what was done to impress those concerned--i.e., the trustees--with John's availability for and claim upon his father's office.[1] Apparently John came to think that only time stood between himself and the presidency, for in the spring of 1912, just prior to the actual termination of his father's career in May, he demonstrated his eagerness by inviting to the campus several persons whom he regarded as potential additions to the seminary faculty in the very near future. He was looking ahead. Undoubtedly, then, he must have been not only thoroughly disappointed but profoundly humiliated when so soon the seminary trustees passed him by with hardly a murmur, and for at least two obvious reasons: First, John was not presidential timber, for, despite the other admirable traits which he possessed and abundantly demonstrated through the course of his long and useful life, he lacked the requisite appreciation for academic excellence. In scholarship he was deficient; he had not emulated his father and was inferior to all his colleagues at the seminary. In short, in and of himself, John Strong was not the man for the hour. But, lest it seem that the trustees acted only on this basis, we hasten to the second of their reasons for rejecting John--namely, that at Rochester there was to be no dynasty. Period!

By their action--or rather inaction--the trustees squelched President Strong's boldest, most temerarious attempt to perpetuate his own orthodoxy. Perhaps the old man had stayed around too long; at least he had remained long enough to learn that he could not always have his own way. The admirers of President Strong's work ought ever to be grateful

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[1]For President Strong's statement on his own minor place in selecting a successor, cf. Annual Report of the Union, 1912, p. 36.

to those trustees for their decision not to establish the school of Augustus Hopkins Strong, but instead willingly to leave his work unshackled, free to find its own level and to make its contribution on its own intrinsic merits. To say all that is not, of course, to ease the pain of disappointment President Strong must have felt in 1912. He had come to the end of his way; he had finished his course. If he had not also won the prize, it may be that he prized too highly some finite end--his own doctrine. But here he was at the close of his days, surrounded by an able faculty which he had gathered, free at last from the burden of economic hard-times, climaxing a career that was as brilliant as it was long--here he was: frustrated. He knew the tendency of the time, and the trustees' rejection of son John only confirmed that Rochester was in tune with the times--for which he could thank none more than himself. Some years earlier his elder son had fallen away, and now the faithful one was shunned because his faith was too little accompanied by learning. Moreover, in these latter years his wife had lost her health and become demented, so that he could not share even the fleeting glory of these closing moments with her. In short, those final days were difficult, frustrating days. President Strong, however, never lost his composure, but displayed all over again his engaging charm and wit and aristocratic bearing. Through the series of ceremonies held in conjunction with his retirement, he himself gave several addresses. In one he told the trustees not to "let the future be eclipsed by the past,"[1] and in another frankly confessed his faith that "this seminary will be preserved from essential error."[2] In the pages that follow, we will see something of the truth of that prediction.

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[1] Ibid., p. 35.

[2] The Record (May, 1912), 22.

VI

The four decades of A. H. Strong's administration at Rochester were years of challenge and change. Strong responded to the challenge with important alterations in his own thought. And, so far as the seminary was concerned, he brought to the faculty men who were abreast of their times. As a result, modifications occurred in the actual course of studies itself. Thus, religious liberalism was introduced at Rochester--not overnight, not suddenly, but gradually and, as it were, naturally. As the original, older group with whom Strong worked died away, the Big Five was brought together, and already with them was an openness to the new, especially evolution and biblical criticism. Then, as they fell by the way, they were replaced by the younger generation, the liberals. Yet, with the single exception of Betteridge's succession to Osgood's chair in Old Testament, no change was really radical at the time of its occurrence, and there is no reason at all to think that President Strong was ever anything other than eminently self-conscious within his own person and in behalf of the school as these changes occurred. The surprise would be to discover him making as important a decision as the addition of a new faculty member in any way other than one reflective of careful consideration of what was involved both immediately and over the long-run. What we have seen is the extent to which the transition to religious liberalism was already under way at Rochester up to 1912 when President Strong retired. We turn now to see how the transition was completed and to observe something of the effects of that transition.

CHAPTER V

THE TRANSITION TO LIBERALISM COMPLETED: 1912-1915

The summer of 1912 was a crisis-time in the life of the Rochester Theological Seminary. A. H. Strong's retirement created two vacancies--the presidency and the chair of systematic theology--and Cornelius Woelfkin's resignation made a third--in homiletics. Thus suddenly there were three vacancies. Moreover, it was but two years since death had claimed the favored William Arnold Stevens. Little wonder that

> apprehensions . . . were then freely expressed. . . . Many of the alumni and of the devoted friends of the school were convinced that there would be a period of retrogression and that a new start from a lower level would have to be made in the future.[1]

Added to all this was the fact that the pain involved in frustrating John Strong's desires to rise to the top was not yet assuaged.

Still, decisions had to be made--decisions which would profoundly affect the future direction of the seminary. Fortunately, the trustees were in no hurrying mood, but played the part of wisdom and decided not to decide then and there on a successor to President Strong. Instead, they chose an interim administrator and for their choice turned quite naturally to one whom they already knew and admired--Dean J. W. A. Stewart. Thus, Stewart, who had distinguished himself as pastor of Rochester's First Baptist Church, who had won the favor of his colleagues and his students as professor of Christian ethics and as dean, and who had now for several

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[1]E. W. Parsons in CRDS Bulletin, XX (February, 1948), 154.

years lifted a good bit of the administrative load from President Strong's shoulders--thus Stewart became "acting president" of the seminary. He held this position for three years, probably considerably longer than he or anyone else had originally anticipated, and during these three years he demonstrated all over again and in different ways his selfless devotion to the Christian gospel, to theological education, and to the Rochester Seminary. In fact, these three years were to prove of greater significance than any like period in the whole history of the school, and that chiefly because the transition to religious liberalism which was already well underway was now to be completed.

I

At the seminary's seventy-fifth anniversary in 1925, Stewart reflected back upon the events of 1912 and following and said:

> Change had already begun in Dr. Strong's time, and after his retirement in 1912 it went forward rapidly. It has not been a revolutionary change; it has rather been an inevitable and wholesome evolution. . . . The coming to a close of Dr. Strong's administration could not fail to mark the ending of one chapter of the seminary's life and the opening of a new chapter. . . . For forty years the seminary had been taking shape under his hand, and now, in 1912, that hand was withdrawn and other hands must do the shaping. Transition was inevitable.[1]

Inevitable indeed! And significant! Stewart himself told the trustees at the end of his three years as acting president: "It is difficult to realize how greatly and in how many ways the seminary has changed in this time."[2] Yet he was always at pains to remind others that the change which occurred during his brief term in office was not radical, but logical and natural and built upon that which had gone before. He was quite conscious of

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[1] RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 45. [2] Ibid. (June, 1915), 34.

leading the school only further in a direction in which Strong had already taken it. And he insisted that what transpired during his brief administration came to pass "not because change was sought, but because the necessities of the situation demanded it."[1]

What were "the necessities of the situation"? First, of course, were those vacancies we have already noted, the ones created by the withdrawal of Strong and Woelfkin--that is, the presidency and the chairs of systematic theology and homiletics. And very soon there were two additional openings that required to be filled--the chair of English Bible, from which John Henry Mason retired in 1913, and the chair of New Testament interpretation, which John Strong vacated in 1914.[2] Thus, within two years after President Strong stepped down, there were, aside from the presidency itself, vacancies in four academic chairs. As acting president, Stewart was in anything but an enviable position. Yet he faced his task with apparent equanimity, and well he might have, for when he withdrew from his temporary duties in 1915 every vacancy had been filled with a man of competence and purpose. In this regard, indeed, the accomplishments of his brief term in office were nothing short of remarkable: three new professors were hired, one new chair was created, the school's first full-time librarian was employed, and one of the earlier liberals was elevated to a full professorship.

The recipient of the promotion just mentioned was Conrad Henry Moehlman,[3] who succeeded John Strong as professor of New Testament interpretation,

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[1] Ibid.

[2] John Strong left Rochester to become pastor of a church in Baltimore, Maryland. He taught but one year at the seminary beyond the time of his father's retirement, for he spent 1913-14 in Germany, returning just in time to assume his new duties at Baltimore.

[3] Many years later Moehlman reported that in 1912 he had received an offer from another institution, but that Stewart had persuaded him

while the new librarian was Glenn B. Ewell,[1] graduate of the seminary and a sturdy supporter of that liberalism he had imbibed from men whose colleague he now became. The new professorship was filled by Henry Burke Robins,[2] who really occupied not a chair but a settee, being responsible for religious education, the history and philosophy of religion, and missions. The other additions were George Cross[3] in systematic theology and Ernest William Parsons[4] in English Bible and biblical languages. Thus did Stewart fill every academic vacancy--every vacancy, that is, except the chair of homiletics, and that chair was to be filled in 1915 by the incoming president, Therefore, when Stewart released the reins which he had held for so fleeting a journey, he had indeed measured up to "the necessities of the "situation."

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to remain at Rochester. Cf. CRDS Bulletin, XX (February, 1948), 132.

[1]Born at Warsaw, New York, February 26, 1880. B.A., Colgate University, 1903; B.D., RTS, 1912; M.A., Colgate University, 1927. At RTS: assistant librarian, 1912-13; librarian, 1913-28; registrar, 1917-28. At CRDS: associate dean and registrar, 1928-37; dean and registrar, 1937-45. Retired, 1945.

[2]Born at Harlan, Iowa, July 8, 1874. William Jewell College, B.A., 1902, and M.A., 1906. RTS, B.D., 1905. University of Chicago, M.A., 1911, and Ph.D., 1912. Pastor of Baptist churches in Oregon and California, 1905-09. Professor of systematic theology, Pacific Coast Baptist Theological Seminary, 1907-13. At RTS: professor of religious education, history and philosophy of religion and missions, 1913-23; professor of history and philosophy of religion, 1923-28. At CRDS: A. H. Strong professor of history and philosophy of religion, 1928-41; professor emeritus, 1941-49. Died at Orlando, Florida, March 11, 1949.

[3]Born at Bewdley, Ontario, September 21, 1862. University of Toronto, B.A., 1888; McMaster University, B.Th., 1894, and M.A., 1895; University of Chicago, Ph.D., 1900. Pastor of Baptist churches in Canada, 1887-92; 1894-1901. Professor of history, McMaster University, 1901-09; professor of systematic theology, Newton Theological Institution, 1909-12; Davies professor of systematic theology at RTS, 1912-28, and at CRDS, 1928-29. Died at Rochester, January 19, 1929.

[4]Born at Wellington, Somersetshire, England, April 20, 1873. McMaster University: B.A., 1899; B.Th., 1901; B.D., 1902; M.A., 1903. University of Chicago, Ph.D., 1912. Pastor of a Baptist church in Canada,

In the fall of 1914 the seminary faculty consisted of the three new professors just mentioned--Cross, Robins, and Parsons--of librarian Ewell and of four liberals carried over from Strong's day--Betteridge, Rauschenbusch, Moehlman, and Stewart. Stewart later compared this group to their predecessors:

> Anyone who knew the teachers of other days and who knows their successors knows perfectly well that these will not walk in the identical tracks of the former, but will make paths of their own. They too, equally with their predecessors, are Christian scholars and thinkers, men of conviction and power. They too must teach as God gives them to see the truth.[1]

Suffice to say that the coming of the new men and the departure of those whom they replaced signaled the completion, so far as personnel was concerned, of the transition to liberalism at Rochester. Fait accompli; it was a new day. It remains in this chapter for us to take a closer look at the newcomers--Cross, Robins, and Parsons--as well as at some of the internal results of their work at the school.

II

A. H. Strong's last official duties as president of the seminary were completed on May 9, 1912. On June 4, less than four weeks later, the trustees in a special meeting made two decisions of extraordinary significance for the school's future. The one was the naming of Dean Stewart as acting president, and the other was the election of George Cross to the chair of systematic theology.[2] Thus, Cross was the first of the new

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1901-08. Professor of English and sociology, Brandon College, 1912-13; professor of New Testament interpretation, Pacific School of Religion, 1913-14. At RTS: Huntley professor of English Bible and biblical languages, 1914-18; Trevor professor of New Testament interpretation, 1918-28, and at CRDS, 1928-41; professor emeritus, 1941-.

[1] RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 47-48.

[2] For biographical information on Cross, cf. CRDS Bulletin, I (November, 1928), 90-91; ibid. (May, 1929), 251-92.

appointees after Strong's retirement. Stewart and Cross were fellow Canadians and had been acquainted already for better than a score of years. Cross came to Rochester from the Newton Theological Institution, but previously--from 1901 to 1909--he had been professor of history at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. Sometime during those years Strong and Stewart had journeyed together to Hamilton to discuss with Professor Cross the possibility of his joining the faculty at Rochester. President Strong was obviously not favorably impressed and forthwith dropped the matter. Stewart, however, never forgot and, as soon as he was in a position to do so, recommended Cross to the trustees as Strong's successor in systematics.[1] Thus, the trustees were already following Stewart's counsel, even as they made such counsel official.

That there was, however, some tension surrounding these proceedings seems evident from a letter sent to Cross by Walter Rauschenbusch the day following the trustee decision. Rauschenbusch said:

> I want to be among the first to express our satisfaction that the Board has elected you. I hope with all my heart you will see your way clear to accept. We need you, and I think you can look forward to good and happy work here. Whatever hesitation there has been, was the natural and inevitable division of mind when men face a new departure and the new and the old are tugging them back and forth. That is all in the day's work and ought not to deter you. As soon as you are a member of the faculty, the general loyalty to the Seminary will envelop you and I think there will be nothing further to irk you. I can testify that there has never been any official attempt to interfere with my work. Of course we do not know who the president is to be, and whether he will be as wise and tolerant as Dr. Strong, but the tradition of the past will count for a good deal. The faculty has been very harmonious since I have had direct experience of it. You will find a very cordial welcome with the faculty. . . .[2]

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[1]Interview with Glenn B. Ewell, February 26, 1964. A year prior to his election to the faculty, in the spring of 1911, Cross gave an address at the seminary in which he faithfully anticipated all his subsequent published thought. Excerpts from this address were printed in The Record (May, 1911), 4-5.

[2]Letter of W. Rauschenbusch to George Cross, June 5, 1912.

This interesting communication hints at more than it tells, but from it a good bit can fairly be concluded. Apparently Cross himself was not yet decided in favor of moving to Rochester, and that chiefly because his nomination had become the occasion for a crisis--"the new and the old are tugging . . . back and forth." Probably the struggle was between those who desired to perpetuate the Rochester orthodoxy and set their hopes in John Strong and those who for various reasons were impatient for the new and found a willing advocate of their cause in Dean Stewart. Whatever the exact nature of the trouble, Rauschenbusch seemingly regarded it as an inevitable temporary irritation to be endured in order to move ahead, to make a "new departure." And he reassured Professor Cross by reminding him of two things that were really very much bound up together--that President Strong had already established a pattern favorable to free inquiry, a pattern not now likely to be changed, and that Cross could expect at Rochester "a very cordial welcome with the faculty." This last statement indicates another factor which surely must have influenced the trustees in their decision--faculty sentiment. And that the faculty generally favored Cross meant that his election was quite as much a confirmation of what had gone before as it was a "new departure." Rauschenbusch was not, however, wrong in speaking thus of Cross' coming, for it was new--startlingly new. What was new was to have at Rochester a different approach in systematic theology. For forty years now the work of A. H. Strong had clearly dominated that of every other department in the seminary. Suddenly all of that was changed.

Whatever uncertainty there was at the coming of George Cross was soon overcome in the course of his work. At the end of his first year it was remembered that he came "at a crisis," but that he

> 'made good' from the first day with us. The men have been delighted with his method and his attitude and his ability. He met all the tests applied; his counsel has been invaluable to his associates upon the faculty; and he has become a friend to all of us. His coming has greatly strengthened Rochester.[1]

Thus quickly did George Cross win favor in his new post--quietly too, for he was the picture of humility. Arrogance seemed wholly absent from him, and because he was so obviously possessed of a deep and genuine piety, he was an ideal choice as the liberal successor to A. H. Strong. A few months after his death in 1929, C. A. Barbour characterized him as follows:

> Dr. Cross was a very remarkable man. He was a fine student even in his early years, making an honorable record for ability and achievement. No one could meet him without the realization that he was in the presence of an unusual mentality and character. He loved nature; he loved great literature; he loved all which was high and clean. He was a wonderful teacher; he stimulated and aroused his students. There was a great reality in the atmosphere of his classroom. He loved the lowly. . . . He had something of the compassion of Jesus in his attitude toward shadowed and burdened lives. He loved his Master, and spoke of Him in terms of reverence and spiritual devotion.[2]

A one-time student remembered him as "not only a keen thinker but a devout man. There was a pietistic background in his life which always enriched his spirit."[3] In this, which set the tone for his life Cross was indeed not unlike his new colleagues--Betteridge, Rauschenbusch, and Stewart, all of whom were characterized by the same rich evangelicalism. Like them also, Cross' piety was demonstrated in a faithful churchmanship.

It was this wholly unobtrusive piety more than anything else which enabled George Cross to acquire a ready following among the friends of the seminary as the successor to A. H. Strong. But he won the favor of the

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[1] RTS Bulletin (May, 1913), 8.

[2] CRDS Bulletin, I (June, 1929), 415.

[3] R. C. Speer in The Baptist (March 23, 1929), 394.

students also through his uncommon ability as a teacher. According to one former student, Cross "was incapable of a dull lecture. . . . To see him state a problem and solve it, face a dilemma and resolve it, was to know in very truth what mastery and dignity may belong to the human mind."[1] Another spoke at greater length:

> Dr. Cross was a teacher who lived his teaching. His progressive theology was reflected in his life. . . . He saved us from narrowness, prejudice, finality; he saved us to open-mindedness, tolerance, and the joy of adventure. He hesitated about giving us facts, yet he eagerly gave us a method of self-discovery. He refused to be dogmatic. . . . His aim as a teacher . . . was to develop able thinkers, men who could stand upon their own feet, however not only to stand, but to advance. . . .
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> In the privacy of his office . . . he was at his best. Boyish in manner, he would weave his conferences with songs and stories of Canada and England; he would get to his feet and act out the part of characters under discussion; he would illustrate with experience gained from his extensive travels; he would reveal his past trials and his future longings; he would encourage and he would guide. It was here that I learned that he prepared himself anew for each individual lecture; that he constantly revised his material; that committee meetings were the bane of his public life; and that he longed for the time when he could give himself entirely to writing. . . . Dr. Cross was a man who demanded much; he was also a man who gave much. It pleased him immensely to be crowded by a scholar, for work to him was the beginning of genius.[2]

Little wonder that such a teacher won his students!

As an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto, Cross had distinguished himself in the Honors Course in both philosophy and the classics. Thereafter for the next several years he served as pastor of Baptist churches in Canada. Then he went to McMaster University, where he studied the history of Christian doctrine with Albert Henry Newman, receiving the Master of Arts in 1895. Up to about this time he had been "a

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[1]Letter of Oren H. Baker to C. A. Barbour, March 5, 1929. Baker was later on the faculty and then dean of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School.

[2]Stanley I. Stuber, in CRDS Bulletin, I (May, 1929), 272-73.

fairly thoroughgoing Calvinist in theology," grimly applying his logic. But all this began to change for him when a friend sent him a copy of W. Robertson Smith's The Old Testament in the Jewish Church (1881). The reading of this volume marked "a turning point in his career," which "to the last" he referred to "with emotion."[1] A whole new world of theological possibilities seemed to open before him, and he determined to engage in further formal study. He became a Fellow in Systematic Theology at the University of Chicago, spent a year abroad--at Edinburgh and Berlin--and received the Doctor of Philosophy from Chicago in 1900. Then, within a few months, he returned to McMaster to succeed his former mentor, A. H. Newman, as professor of history. Thus, by the time he began teaching systematic theology at Newton in 1909 he had been prepared not only by several years as a practicing pastor, by a formal education of admirable breadth and quality, but by years of first-hand endeavor in general as well as ecclesiastical history.

As the successor to A. H. Strong in systematic theology, George Cross must have been as much conscious as anyone in his generation of standing on the borderline between the old and the new. This consciousness was articulated in an address given at the beginning of his second year at the seminary. Said Professor Cross:

> The Christian thinker will build . . . a structure of doctrine in which the spirit of faith of the present can live and utter itself. The theologian of the present is not specially called upon to destroy or repair the doctrinal forms of former times. If he is worthy of his calling he will revere these forms, for he will find in them monuments of a great Christian past, indispensable for the interpretation of our history and our present relation to the past. But he will see clearly that they can never again be to men what they once were. The noble cathedrals in which men of the past set forth to the human imagination the

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[1]E. W. Parsons, in CRDS Bulletin, I (May, 1929), 283.

> mysteries of their faith . . . are ill-suited to the purposes of modern evangelization. . . . Let us neither tear them down nor mend them. Let us not mar the workmanship of men who wrought in earlier times by robbing their structures of those features that do not suit our modern needs. Rather let them stand in their own grandeur to utter the spirit of their own age and to distinguigh it from ours. But let us of this new age set ourselves to the task of building for our own time structures in which a living man can be at home with his God and do his work.[1]

Surely those in the audience at Rochester would most naturally apply such remarks to the grand structure of thought erected by A. H. Strong himself:

> monuments of a great Christian past. . . .
> they can never again be to men what they once were. . . .
> let them stand in their own grandeur. . . .
> But let us of this new age set ourselves. . . .

This was as much as George Cross ever said openly about his predecessor. The words of Santayana are apropos: "We do not nowadays refute our predecessors, we pleasantly bid them good-bye."[2]

In 1911, a year before he joined the faculty at Rochester, Professor Cross published a volume entitled The Theology of Schleiermacher. His first major contribution to theological scholarship--and by every standard the most important of all his literary productions--this work was of immediate considerable significance when it came from the press. Up to this time only a negligible portion of Schleiermacher's work had been translated into English, and another decade-and-a-half was to pass before his magnum opus, Der Christliche Glaube (1821), would be available to the English reader.[3] George Cross' volume of 1911 was calculated to help fill this void, consisting as it did of a "careful condensation" of Der Christliche Glaube

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[1]"The Call of the Day to the Religious Thinker," RTS Bulletin (January, 1914), 10.

[2]Quoted in Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 163.

[3]F.D.E. Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928).

(177 pages) sandwiched between an historical introduction (111 pages) and a critical estimate of Schleiermacher's place in Christian theology (38 pages). The whole is carefully done and eminently readable. Within the general limits of the shared biases of the author's own evangelical Protestant orientation, the historical introduction is accurate and fair, while the theological critique is quite perceptive, even brilliant in spots. In the historical survey Cross shows very clearly how both Protestant biblicism (revealed theology) and rationalism (natural theology) had been called into question, most notably by Hume and Kant, and how the manifest impotence of the older theology contributed to "the saving revival"--eighteenth century pietism--which in turn produced in the person of Schleiermacher a reworking of "the traditional doctrinal system from the standpoint of evangelical religious experience."[1] Cross concluded his critique as follows:

> It remains the imperishable honor of Schleiermacher that he grasped the whole problem of theology in a new way and compelled theologians of all schools to follow him. . . . He has gradually forced modern theology to attempt the radical reconstruction of every traditional doctrine.[2]

Half-a-century later that judgment retains its essential validity, and requires to be qualified only slightly, and that only by an interpretation of the wording. That is, it is proper to claim that theologians of all schools are compelled to "follow" Schleiermacher only in the sense that they cannot possibly evade his questions; they are not necessarily bound to "follow" his experiential approach.

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[1] The Theology of Schleiermacher (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1911), p. 104.

[2] Ibid., pp. 333-34.

To George Cross, however, as to many of his contemporaries, the option opened by Schleiermacher seemed the only suitable way of avoiding the Scylla of a sterile biblical literalism without running into the Charybdis of an untenable rationalism. In an attempt to steer a straight course between these two extremes, Cross gladly followed in the wake of Schleiermacher, who had, according to him, "spiritualized" and "Christianized" theology. Of course, Cross was fully aware of the chief objections raised against Schleiermacher's method of doctrinal construction on the basis of reflection upon religious experience, and the most serious of these objections--three in number--he faced head-on. His brief replies in behalf of his great German mentor quite clearly were spoken also in his own behalf. Furthermore, as we will see, in these pithy answers to criticisms of Schleiermacher, Cross anticipated the main lines of almost the whole of his own subsequent thought.

The first charge against Schleiermacher was that his experiential conception of theology "is subversive of the authority of all doctrine." Cross responded quite directly by admitting that indeed "the separate authority of all doctrinal formulae is destroyed," then added the telltale words: "Authority is transferred to the religious spirit--let us say, the Spirit of God."[1] I do not suppose that Schleiermacher himself ever made so careless a statement, which as it stands appears antinomian and upsetting of all authority, though I am inclined to agree that Cross was not unfaithful to the direction of Schleiermacher's thought. But here it was indeed George Cross and not Friedrich Schleiermacher who was speaking! Undoubtedly, Professor Cross was stating his own case. Often

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[1] Ibid., p. 308.

in later years he referred to authority in religion, but never at length and usually to remind his readers that the very idea of an external authority in religion was outmoded.

The second objection was very close to the first, raising again the question of authority. Some critics, Professor Cross noted, oppose Schleiermacher's experiential view on the ground that it "makes religion individualistic and subjective and does away with its normative character." In his response, Cross was again quite candid:

> Religion that is not a matter of subjective experience is not religion at all, and doctrine that does not express subjective conviction is meaningless or worse; while it is also true that every man must be his own theologian, whatever the consequences.[1]

Thus Cross not only admitted the validity of the charge of subjectivism, but in noting the necessity for this dimension in all worthy theology, confessed his own willingness to live with the consequences of an approach that was essentially subjective. Apparently he did not grasp the real force of the objection he was answering. The statement above was basically his answer and not Schleiermacher's, as Cross himself knew. He continued:

> At the same time Schleiermacher has indicated a way of escape from mere subjectivism by emphasizing the communion-forming power of Christian faith. Through the continuity and development of the Christian communion a continuous and normal and therefore normative character is secured.[2]

Since evangelical Protestantism has amply demonstrated an ability, perhaps even an inclination, to become almost wholly individualistic, Professor Cross here put his finger on one of the major contributions of Schleiermacher. But it is far from certian that a transfer from individual to corporate experience--even in its historical dimensions--really provides

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[1] Ibid., p. 309. [2] Ibid.

"a way of escape from mere subjectivism." We will see below how Cross himself worked out these lines of thought in his other published writings.

So far we have noticed how Cross answered two major objections to Schleiermacher's theology--that it was subversive of doctrinal authority and that it was individualistic and subjective. He responded to yet a third objection, namely, Schleiermacher's "classification of dogmatics under historical theology." Cross recognized that this criticism was based on the notion that "the aim of dogmatics is to set forth the doctrines that are essential to Christianity, that is, to arrive at a final and complete statement of Christian truth," and his reply again was straightforward and to the point:

> It is to be remembered that final truth or truths can only approximately be known to us. All dogmas indicate simply stages in our approach to this goal and must be arranged in an order of succession upon earlier attempts to do the same thing. Our dogmas may have final value for ourselves, but for coming generations their value will be historical.[1]

Here Cross was alluding to a notion which was of immense significance to him--his understanding of history, which was actually a doctrine of progress. In the pages that follow we will see how he developed this important motif, but first we must examine more closely his view of experience and the way in which he fitted this to a personalist idealism. We will be looking at various occasional pieces as well as at his three major volumes--What Is Christianity? (1918), Creative Christianity (1922), and Christian Salvation (1925).

We have already noticed the boldness with which Professor Cross accepted the experiential approach even in the face of the charge of subjectivism. From this he never shrunk, but rather insisted that

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[1] Ibid.

> the materials of theology are . . . human experiences. It turns to the inner life, the self-conscious life, of men . . . and seeks to know what is there. It is interested in the religious experiences of all men and with all their religious experience. At the same time it seeks to discover those religious experiences of men which have shown themselves to be the most valuable. . . . Modern theology is thoroughly humanistic. It seeks to know God and to interpret his ways, first of all, by discovering his ways in the souls of men. . . . And as [the Christian theologian] begins with personal experience, so he ever goes back to personal experience, as a touchstone by which to test his conclusions.[1]

Cross defined "experience" as follows:

> The term experience is to be taken in a wide sense, not as denoting merely an effect on our sensibilities, or that which comes to our consciousness, but as well the whole of our intellectual and volitional activities. There is no purely passive human experience.[2]

Here Cross was deliberately going beyond Schleiermacher, who had referred to the religious experience as the feeling of absolute dependence, and had consistently subsumed the intellectual and the volitional under the aesthetic. Over against this, Cross was at pains to speak of man as simultaneously a thinking, feeling, willing being,[3] though his statement that "there is no purely passive human experience" seems to indicate that he really wanted to give priority to the volitional aspect. Man, then, is first and foremost a willing being, standing on his own two feet, deciding, acting, and as such, free.

In another reference to experience, Cross spoke of it as

> the one unbroken series of thoughts, volitions and feelings which are unified in my mind in such a way that I can call them mine in a sense in which no other can call them his. They are not mere happenings to my mind but they occur within my mind. They are 'experiences' because they belong to one life-long experience in which I am aware of myself as present to them all. Hence, in the end, I am the authoritative expounder of those events.[4]

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[1] RTS Bulletin (May, 1916), 43-44. [2] Ibid., (May, 1915), p..20.

[3] For Cross' criticism of Schleiermacher on this point, cf. The Theology of Schleiermacher, pp. 314ff.

[4] Christian Salvation (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), p. 118, n. 1.

This is at once both a defense of the integrity of the individual and a forthright statement of the experiential basis for individualism. No one else can interpret my experience: "I am the authoritative expounder of those events." It follows, of course, that, by the same token, I cannot interpret the experience of another; only he can do that. This is to say, in effect, that every man is shut up to his own experience. And it requires little imagination to envision an infinite extension of perpetual stand-offs between autonomous individuals, all of whom share the same presuppositions. Apparently Cross did not recognize this problem; at least he never dealt with it directly or proposed a solution.

As noted above, Schleiermacher sought to avoid the subjectivism of individualism by emphasizing "the communion-forming power of Christian faith." This, too, became a main feature in the thought of George Cross,[1] but with important deviations from Schleiermacher. Cross did not share Schleiermacher's own healthy appreciation for the church, with its ministry and sacraments, as an institution for the perpetuation and exposition of the Christian faith. Instead, with respect to ecclesiastical questions, Cross remained characteristically individualistic, putting the individual over against the church. For instance, he criticized Schleiermacher's notion that baptism is "the exercise of the church's will to receive the baptized."[2] It would have sufficed for a Baptist simply to correct Schleiermacher by suggesting that, in order to be truly responsible, baptism should be an expression of the will of the individual as well as of the church.

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[1]Cf. What Is Christianity? (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1918), pp. 197-99; and Christian Salvation, pp. 124-29, 151-53, 207-35; passim.

[2]The Theology of Schleiermacher, p. 329.

Instead, Cross seemingly took a purely individualistic, and therefore non-churchly, view of baptism. Actually, one looks in Cross in vain for a doctrine of the sacraments or for an ecclesiology. Once he referred briefly to "the instrumental value" of institutions,[1] but when he spoke at greater length he was negative. For example, in his Nathaniel William Taylor Lectures at Yale in 1921, he told his audience that

> the establishment of sacraments [was] called forth by special circumstances and [was] meant to serve special purposes that no longer obtain among multitudes of Christian people. So much so is this the case that it is no longer necessary in such an assembly as this to argue the question in general. I may add that I do not think that the situation . . . is regrettable. . . . It seems to be indicative of a growing clearness of the consciousness of our relation to God and an immediacy of the assurance of his favor that have led inevitably to the discarding those artificial supports, as a sound man throws away the crutches which he found at one time necessary.[2]

Nothing vague about that!

It is well at this point to recall that in speaking of "the materials of theology" as "human experiences," Cross claimed that theology "seeks to discover those religious experiences of men which have shown themselves to be the most valuable."[3] Obviously, according to him, though he could on occasion refer to the "instrumental" value of the church, theology had finally made the discovery that the church was not among those experiences now or still to be deemed "most valuable." This is what can be called the functional approach to theology. The worth of any particular doctrine or form or structure or institution--in fact, the

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[1] What Is Christianity?, p. 170.

[2] Creative Christianity (New York: Macmillan, 1922), pp. 30-31. Cross wrote disparagingly of "Catholic sacramentalism" in his Christian Salvation, chap. 4.

[3] RTS Bulletin (May, 1916), 43.

worth of anything that can be conceived--is determined on the basis of its functional value for present human life. To quote from a leading adherent of this approach:

> Function is concerned with use. Every function in an organism serves some end either in the survival or in the well-being of the organism. . . . As functions become more highly specialized, specialized organs are developed for carrying them on. . . . The development of the organism depends upon its ability to respond to new aspects of its environment, to develop new functions and to grow new organs.[1]

Such an approach makes the really important questions those of practicality and efficiency, and special value comes to be attached to that which "works." But when this is applied to Christianity, so that Christians become chiefly concerned with results, the religion of Jesus Christ is too easily transformed from the way of the cross into a gospel of success.

The functional approach is infinite in its application.[2] But the really crucial question is how and on what basis modern theology determines what is "most valuable." Again, this is the question of authority. George Cross did not lack an answer. He consistently regarded as "most valuable" that which produces "personality" and brings into being "the better world."[3] But what is personality, and how do we recognize the better world when we see it? Cross had a great deal to say on both questions, as we will see below. For now, our concern is to note that, on purely pragmatic or functional grounds, he was confident that Christianity had outgrown the church.

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[1]William Clayton Bower, "A Functional Concept of Religion," in Faith of the Free, ed. W. E. Garrison (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1940), p. 3. Bower was one of that significant constellation of scholars at the University of Chicago that together made that school the foremost center for theology worked out along functional lines. The clearest summary statement of the position of the Chicago school is the volume edited by Bower, The Church at Work in the Modern World (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935).

[2]Cf. Cross, What Is Christianity?, pp. 177-85; passim.

[3]Cf. Creative Christianity, chaps. 2-3; passim.

No, to be more precise, Christianity had outgrown the visible church, which came now to be displaced by the invisible.[1]

If the idea of the church as visible community had outgrown its usefulness for George Cross, he did not therefore overlook altogether Schleiermacher's emphasis on the corporate nature of Christianity, but instead carried that emphasis into the non-ecclesiastical areas of life. Thus, when Cross affirmed that "the power of the Protestant Christian faith is manifest in its developing community life,"[2] he referred not to the church as such, not to the church in the world, but to the world viewed as a church. For instance, in discussing the application of Christian principles to the industrial and commercial order, he said:

> A man's business or vocation . . . is transformed from a means of gain at whatever cost to others into a means of furthering the helpful communion of man with man. The exchange of goods becomes a medium for the higher exchange of the wealth of spirit and the whole becomes a means of building up one another by individual and cooperative enterprise. In this way the Christian principle tends to the permanence and success of the business relation and to the erection of a community that is rich in all goods. . . . That is, the industrial and commercial system has become a Christian church.[3]

So, the invisible church becomes suddenly visible again. The picture Cross paints is indeed attractive, though he does seem to overlook human self-interest and greed, to mention a couple of things. It almost seems as if he has found a way to label "church" whatever stands at the moment in need of sanctification. But has the word lost its meaning when it becomes that general? More interesting, perhaps, is the fact that this kind of social expression often passed for the social gospel,[4] though the social gospel's

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[1]Cross regarded the concept of the "invisible" church as one of the greatest contributions of John Calvin, though it can hardly be said that Cross used the term in the same way as the reformer. Cf. "An Explanation of the Early Successes of Calvinism," Review and Expositor, II (April, 1905), 178-85.

[2]Christian Salvation, p. 124. [3]Ibid., p. 233.

[4]E. W. Parsons called it such. Cf. CRDS Bulletin, I (May, 1929), 287.

radical critique of laissez-faire economics[1] is here lost sight of. In some such way the social gospel became for many only another form of culture-religion.[2] The cutting edge of the gospel seems to have been dulled, and modern man was too easily left to go his own way, easy conscience and all. This apparent loss of the sense of sin[3] was buttressed by Cross' insistence that "guilt and the consciousness of guilt are inseparable in principle."[4]

One more aspect of Cross' experiential approach requires to be noted, and that is that, for him, the universe could never adequately be interpreted in terms of mechanism or impersonal process. As he saw things, the universe was the expression of personality and required a complete personality to explain it. In other words he was an idealist of the personalist sort,[5] and it was this metaphysical doctrine which, so far as he was concerned provided the basis for the argument from experience. He put it this way:

> When we seek for the secret of the great spiritual movements that ultimately affect all mankind in common and in which at the same time each member of the race is actively a participant we

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[1]Cf. Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, chaps. 5-7; Christianizing the Social Order, parts III and IV.

[2]On this point, cf. Cross' justification of capitalism and economic prosperity, "The Changing Perspective in Theology," RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 250. See also his post-World War I vindication of war in a manner that would make all war religious, Christian Salvation, pp. 124, 126. It may be that Cross only learned too well from Schleiermacher, who has been severely criticized by Reinhold Niebuhr for providing ideological support for German racism and nationalism. Cf. The Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), I, pp. 85-89.

[3]Cross often spoke of original sin and depravity as outmoded notions. E.g., Christian Salvation, p. 126.

[4]Ibid., p. 191; cf. pp. 191-95.

[5]Cross first learned personal idealism at the feet of George Paxton Young of the University of Toronto. Young had earlier exercised considerable influence over J. W. A. Stewart, and it seems likely that Stewart first met George Cross through the good graces of Professor Young.

> find it to be in the presence to our human spirit, in all its movements, of a supreme, personal self-consciousness that embraces in its end the inner unity of all mankind with itself. For the human consciousness there is and must be a God, and all the activities of this God-consciousness within us demand as their final explanation the existence of such a supreme personality.[1]

From this perspective Cross maintained that the "basic affirmation" of Christianity was "the declaration of the supreme worth of personality," for "GOD IS PERSONALITY."[2] With this sort of language the distinction between Creator and creature is at least blurred if not lost sight of altogether, while the human person seems to merge into divine personality, and God tends to be equated with the human God-consciousness. This is the basis of Cross' final loss of the cherished individual in the broad expanses of his own idealism.[3] Cross adhered to an idealistic philosophy which had its theological counterpart in a thorough-going doctrine of divine immanence,[4] and the linking of the two made it possible for him to overlook--or at least to smooth over--the antinomies and paradoxes of finite existence. And the whole tended toward that pantheism which, according to Alexis de Tocqueville, was "most fitted to seduce the human mind in democratic times."[5]

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[1] RTS Bulletin (May, 1915), 21; cf. ibid. (May, 1925), 251. Cross criticised Schleiermacher for failing to recognize that "the religious experience is governed by the consciousness of personality." The Theology of Schleiermacher, p. 318.

[2] Christian Salvation, pp. 135, 154. The capitalization is his.

[3] The loss of the individual is particularly evident in the displacement of the traditional doctrine of the resurrection of the body by a conception of immortality. Cf. ibid., pp. 252-53.

[4] Cf. "How Shall We Think of God?," Homiletic Review, LXXXV (May, 1923), 347-49.

[5] Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, trans. Henry Reeve, ed. Phillips Bradley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1945), II, p. 33.

What about the place of Jesus Christ in the Christianity of George Cross? His appeal was, as we have noted, to experience, and for him the best model for our experience was the "perfect personality" who is Jesus Christ.[1] Here was the one for us to follow, and here, too, the main clue regarding the use of the Bible--as sourcebook for the experience of Jesus.[2] But is one to look to the personal history of Jesus of Nazareth or to his effect upon his followers? In other words, what is the relation between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith? Cross was certainly aware of this problem. He criticized Schleiermacher for failing to see that "the Christ of theology must agree with the Jesus of the gospels,"[3] yet he himself never reached a satisfactory solution. He pondered the varied conclusions of the biblical scholarship of his time, then finally ducked the critical problems by asserting that "we can have little interest in him [Jesus] . . . apart from the impression he made on men at the time and afterwards."[4] Thus, in the end he selected the option most favored by experiential theologians and turned from Jesus to the "impression" he made, from the historical Jesus to the Christ of faith as progressively disclosed "in the creative activity" of his disciples across the ages.[5] Yet Cross seems to have had a firm grip on the importance of the historical reality of the man Jesus as the real source of the Christian faith, for he never

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[1]Cf. Creative Christianity, chap. 2.

[2]This seems to be the whole significance of the Bible. The Old Testament, therefore, possesses only historic interest and is useful principally for illustrative purposes.

[3]The Theology of Schleiermacher, p. 326.

[4]Creative Christianity, p. 65. Cf. "Christianity and Christology," Journal of Religion, IV (November, 1924), 600-10; and "The Attitude of the Modern Theologian Toward Jesus Christ," Biblical World, XLVII (January, 1916), 25-33.

[5]Cf. Creative Christianity, p. 93.

actually carried the experiential pattern to its ultimate logical conclusion of equating cause with effect, making Christ equal the Christian experience and the Christian experience Christ. Ironically, it may be that the saving factor here was his personal idealism. That is, it seems likely that Cross' interest in and devotion to the historic Jesus was his way of insuring finally that his idealistic metaphysics would remain also personalist, for it was Jesus who embodied "the perfect personality." Anyway, it was on this basis that Cross made the claim that "the Christian faith is identical with the spirit of loyalty to a historic figure of the past who is at the same time the ideal figure of the future. This figure bears the name Jesus Christ."[1] In order adequately to evaluate that statement, however, we must have in mind Cross' conception of history, to which we now turn.

We noted above Cross' assertion that "all dogmas indicate simply stages in our approach to this goal [final truth] and must be arranged in an order of succession upon earlier attempts to do the same thing."[2] Here he was not so much rebuking the pride of the theologians as stating a theory of doctrinal development, a theory which was essentially a doctrine of progress. Cross was at pains to relieve the present from the tyranny of the past, but he ended up making the present the lord of the past and the future the ruler of all. Borrowing words from the sentence just quoted, his view may be stated in sum as follows: Earlier stages in the chronological approach to the goal of truth are manifestly antiquated, so that the present task of theology is to arrange the remains from these

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[1] Christian Salvation, p. 221.

[2] The Theology of Schleiermacher, p. 309. See above, p. 183.

outdated levels of understanding in an order of succession which contemporary theology may crown with the fruit of its own effort without wasting its substance in the far country of a bygone day. Thus, there is progress and there is optimism, but Cross also added a note of humility: "Our dogmas may have final value for ourselves, but for coming generations their value will be historical."[1]

This understanding of history and approach to theology was demonstrated many times over in Cross' published works. His favored catalog of the consecutive stages in the progressive development of the Christian religion was presented most fully in the volume entitled What Is Christianity? Here he surveyed six "rival interpretations" (Apocalypticism, Catholicism, Mysticism, Protestantism, Rationalism, and Evangelicism or Modernized Protestant Christianity), showing how each grew out of, capped off, and went beyond its predecessors. In his lectures on Creative Christianity, he linked his individualism to his doctrine of progress:

> No man's personality is purely a product of the community's life. . . . For there are within each of us endowments that are peculiarly our own. . . . This makes progress possible. Thus the Christian faith is construed within each of us somewhat differently from the way in which it ever was construed before we came. . . . The faith itself became in each of us what it never would or could have been without us. In this way the Christian tradition is now in process of evolution. The Christianity of yesterday was creative of the Christianity of today but at the same time the Christianity of today is more and somewhat other than the Christianity of yesterday. For it recreates that which came from the past and makes it new.

Then, vindicating and consecrating his own profession, Cross said:

> The interpreter of Christianity remakes it by the very act of his interpretation and the Christianity which he passes on to

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[1] Ibid.

> others by his interpretation possesses a character different in degree from that which he received. The interpreter is always a prophet. He puts forth, as it were, a faith that is yet to be.[1]

And the interpreter does this creative work by becoming an historian, mastering history in order to overcome history. Or, as Cross put it, "we shall study Christianity as the progressive discovery of the perfect personality," and "we shall observe it in action bringing into being the better world."[2] So personal idealism is linked to history and historical theology leads directly to practical theology--but the whole finally leads on to idealism's ultimate unity:

> we shall find . . . the power to disclose the meaning of the cosmos, moulding the universe as an intellectual, aesthetic and volitional unity into the likeness of the spirit that dominates the lives of the Christian people.[3]

This then is "creative Christianity"--creative in the sense that it is always being re-created by its own votaries into "a Christian faith higher than that which our fathers gave to us."[4] Indeed, claimed Cross, "we honor the faith of our fathers the most when we transcend it."[5] And it certainly would be unjust to accuse Cross of any lack of confidence in the modern theologian's ability to "transcend" the past. For "the modern man," despite the limitations of his own presuppositions and partialities,

> has the advantage of knowing what earlier ages have thought and why they did so, and that is no small matter. Besides, he has a method of approach that is distinctive and consciously adopted.

And this advantage and method both focus in the fact that "the instruments

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[1] Creative Christianity, pp. 52-53.

[2] Ibid., p. 53; cf. chaps. 2 and 3.

[3] Ibid.; cf. chap. 4. [4] Ibid., p. 12.

[5] "The Attitude of the Modern Theologian," Biblical World, XLVII, 32.

for historical investigation are more nearly perfect than they have ever been and the materials at hand are more abundant."[1] In short, "the men of today are far better equipped than their ancestors to discover the genius and the worth of the Christian faith."[2]

In his final published volume, a study of Christian Salvation, Cross demonstrated how Christianity had passed through several successive levels of understanding, arriving at length at the "modern Protestant" stage, which has a new view of salvation based on a "deeper appreciation of the progress of the Protestant communities and their scientific knowledge." According to this new understanding, "salvation in the true Christian sense means the progressive fulfillment of the inner potencies of our human spirit." Furthermore, "the great basic fact in the newer Protestant interpretation of the Christian salvation is the personal experience of betterment."[3] Thus, because

> progress is essential to well-being, . . . the idea of salvation . . . is not to be regarded as . . . essentially different from any other advance that may take place toward the better in our spiritual life.[4]

All of life is "spiritual," so that the history of the world is essentially the story of salvation--"the story of the effort to transcend a good already attained by the attainment of a higher good."[5] On this view, salvation is progress and progress is salvation. And Cross did not shrink from the logic of his doctrine. "By comparison with the new," he

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[1] Ibid., pp. 28, 26.

[2] "The Stake of Protestantism in the Christian Union Movement," Journal of Religion, II (March, 1922), 133.

[3] Christian Salvation, pp. 124, 118.

[4] Ibid., p. 155.

[5] Ibid., p. 163.

said, "the old is sin, and every time [one] follows the old rather than the new he commits an act of sin."[1] Or, in other words, "THE VETO TO PROGRESS TOWARD THE BETTER--THAT IS SIN."[2] From this perspective Cross could refer to faith as "self-projection into the Beyond," or, more clearly, as "the distinctive human faculty that saves man from falling back into the non-human order from which he arose," which is at the same time "the basic principle of all achievement in any field whatsoever."[3]

Thus and thus did George Cross work out his theology within the framework of a doctrine of progress. One wonders, however, what progress is, whether we really can arrange prior history in any "order of succession," whether the present is indeed qualitatively better than the past, whether the passage of time equals progress and the latter is therefore inevitable, whether to talk about progress at all does not require some standard for measurement, whether then such criterion itself must not be historical, and, if so, whether the whole notion of inevitable progress is not self-defeating--or at least beyond verification. And this is not even to apply the overwhelming empirical arguments against such a doctrine. In short what George Cross seems to have is a doctrine of history that says:

> Blessed be me!
> History, oh history: it all leads up to me!
> Hark, ye sages,
> Though glory be brief, I ride the crest of the ages!
> Blessed be me!
> Humility: to be my progeny's history.

And despite its looking forward to and glorying in the future, such a doctrine is a very arrogant view of the present.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 160-61. [2] Ibid., p. 178. The capitalization is his.

[3] "The Changing Perspective in Theology," RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 262.

Previously we noted Cross' claim that "the Christian faith is identical with the spirit of loyalty to a historic figure of the past who is at the same time the ideal figure of the future."[1] This really is a profoundly Christian statement, but it seems also to be the last vestige of Christianity in George Cross. Cross was chiefly an historian--a professor of systematic theology, but really much more an adherent of historical theology than of systematics. In fact, in him systematics was swallowed up in the historical, a phenomenon characteristic of much of the liberal theology of the time.[2] In the Schleiermacher volume Cross demonstrated himself a capable practitioner of the historian's craft, but it was his view of history--his doctrine of progress--that put the greatest strain upon his Christian faith. For Christianity is a religion of redemption--of redemption from sin--and Cross had a view of history that by its explanation explained sin away. Furthermore, Christianity is a religion of the incarnation, a religion that professes to find its meaning in something that happened in time--in a particular past time--but Cross had a doctrine of history that made the past irrelevant (except as something to be overcome) and even sinful. Still, he professed loyalty to "a historic figure of the past." So there was at least implicit in his thought an unreconciled tension between the historical particularity of Jesus of Nazareth and the doctrine that history was perpetually sloughing off as outmoded all its particularities in its vigorous endeavor to reach its end-point. Cross came very near slipping into the most ludicrous sort of historicism. But, as suggested above, at this point, his personalism

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[1] Christian Salvation, p. 221. See above, p. 192.

[2] For discussion of the theology of this period, cf. G. B. Smith, Religious Thought in the Last Quarter-Century, pp. 95-115; and W. M. Horton, "Systematic Theology," in Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century, ed. A. S. Nash (New York: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 105-21.

saved him. Rather, it should probably be said, his own evangelical experience saved him, while his personal idealism gave him a way of relating that experience to a doctrine of progress. Or, it might be argued, his functionalism saved him--he kept Jesus because he needed him.[1] As for the doctrine of progress as such, it was probably really his evangelical experience which in some ways provided Cross with a standard for measuring betterment, though here he was manifestly too uncritical.

What Cross seemingly wanted was to regard history as at once both progressive and normless, with the historian's task being the redemptive function of demonstrating the order of succession in such a way as to guide the present toward an anticipated future. But that was to ask too much, and the tragedy is that to the very end Cross remained unaware of the extent that his reach exceeded his grasp. He died in 1929, on the eve of the economic disaster that so severely shook the confidence of other like-minded optimists--liberal and conservative alike. For better than seventeen years he taught at Rochester, where he was admired for the depth of his spirit and the quality of his work. Of course, his influence was scattered abroad through his writings, which are consistently characterized by all the orderliness and grace that we found too much lacking in the writings of his more impetuous colleague, C. H. Moehlman. Cross' works show signs of a great deal of meticulous care on the part of their author; they are models for the careful use of words.

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[1]It is significant that Cross once seriously questioned the validity of retaining the notion of a personal God because such a doctrine did not seem to be needed to substantiate a fundtionalist morality. Cf. "Does a Philosophy of Morals Tend to Undermine the Christian Faith in a Personal God?," Journal of Religion, I (March, 1921), 197-99. Cross' later writings show, however, that he remained a personalist.

As to his theology generally, George Cross is indeed a representative figure of his time. He was at home with his contemporary thought-world, within and without the church, and he expressed to some extent in his own work all of the main emphases of the period: history, biblical criticism, comparative religion, evolution, experience, social concern--not to mention the doctrines that shaped his peculiar approach to these emphases: progress, personal idealism, functionalism, individualism. Cross wanted something of everything the liberals of his day were offering, but, as we have seen, he carried many of these liberal themes to uncritical extremes. And he was the man who succeeded A. H. Strong. To suggest that he did not walk in the same way would be to utter a grand understatement.

III

George Cross was the first of the new liberals brought to Rochester during Dean Stewart's administration; Henry Burke Robins[1] was the second. Robins grew up in rural Iowa, spent his youth in a frontier settlement in Colorado (where he was ordained to the ministry prior to entering college), graduated from William Jewell College and the Rochester Seminary, served as pastor of a small church in Oregon, then in 1907 became acting professor of systematic theology at the Pacific Coast Baptist Theological Seminary (the present Berkeley Baptist Divinity School). In 1909 his former teachers at Rochester honored him with one of their first graduate fellowships, and he embarked upon studies in systematic theology at the University of Chicago. There he studied with Gerald Birney Smith and Shailer Mathews.[2] He received the Ph.D. magna cum laude in June, 1912, then

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[1]For biographical information on Robins, cf. CRDS Bulletin, I (November, 1928), 92-94; XIII (May, 1941), 109-120; and XXI (May, 1949), 4-14.

[2]Cf. S. Mathews, "Professor Robins as a Thinker," CRDS Bulletin, XIII (May, 1941), 116-20.

returned to the Baptist Seminary at Berkeley, declining an invitation to become the successor to George Cross at the Newton Theological Seminary. A year later, in 1913, he became Cross' colleague at Rochester.

Professor Robins was an earnest and loyal churchman, a "working member" of one of the Baptist congregations in Rochester. To his colleagues and friends he was "a strong saint of God," while "to many a questioning student he was like 'the shadow of a rock in a weary land.'"[1] He was persistently in demand to preach in the churches, and he consciously did his work with the people of the churches in mind. Furthermore, he labored closely with and within the structures of his own denomination--especially with regard to the denomination's foreign mission endeavor. Thus, it would be quite proper to say of Robins that, in the very best sense of the term, he was essentially a denominational theologian; that is, he was a denominational theologian in no sectarian sense but in deliberately and persistently giving himself in service to and through the body that had nurtured him. And if he remained at home with the Baptists, it was not because he lacked the opportunity to make a change. In 1919, after he had been at Rochester half-a-dozen years, he was invited to join the faculty of a non-denominational seminary on the West Coast. According to a letter written at the time, a major factor in his decision to remain at Rochester was his relationship to the denomination:

> I have more than a nominal interest in the Baptist denomination. I am a progressive in religion, but I have a profound desire, as a progressive to make my contribution from within the denomination. To be sure, I should have remained a Baptist had I gone with Dr. Nash, but with no very vital denominational connection.[2]

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[1]E. W. Parsons, in CRDS Bulletin, XXI (May, 1949), 6.

[2]Letter of Robins to G. A. Barbour, May 12, 1919. The school was the Pacific School of Religion. The "Dr. Nash" was Charles Sumner Nash, then president of the Berkeley institution.

So, Robins was a denominational theologian--of the progressive sort. In this regard, he typifies many of the liberals of his day who helped alter the character of some of the leading denominations by being the sort of Christians that they were where they were. With men like Robins, service to the churches and to the denomination was a calling, a stewardship.

Professor Robins was not a prolific writer, though he was a skilled and careful one. All his writings are characterized by that sort of scientific precision which in his time became a hallmark for works emanating from the Chicago school where he studied. He added his own highly developed stylistic artistry, so that some of his writings, particularly the later ones, are good examples of articulate literary theology. His only published books were his M.A. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation, neither of which was circulated widely or attracted much attention.[1] In a way, his work was done in a corner, for, though he produced a rather steady stream of articles (mostly lectures), almost all--about three out of four--appeared in the local Bulletin. Of the rest, only half-a-dozen were published in standard journals, and these within the relatively brief span of years from 1914 to 1920.[2] Thus, most of his better work--in fact, I think, all of his best work--was not given to more than the limited reading audience of the seminary's own journal. Since the pages of the leading academic journals were certainly not closed to him, one wonders why he closed himself off from them. It may be that he, like Moehlman and Cross and probably others, lived with the hope of making the local publication into a

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[1] Aspects of Authority in the Christian Religion (Philadelphia: Griffith and Rowland Press, 1911); and The Basis of Assurance in Recent Protestant Theologies (Kansas City, Missouri: Charles E. Brown Printing Co., 1912).

[2] Three articles appeared in Biblical World (in 1914, 1915, and 1917), two in Religious Education (in 1915 and 1920), and one in American Journal of Theology (in 1918). See bibliography.

major journal. But at least Moehlman and Cross did not let this deter them from seeking a larger audience through already well-established media. Anyway, the facts regarding the actual outlets utilized by Professor Robins underscore the contention made above that he was essentially a denominational theologian.

Robins was the only one of the Rochester liberals to write at length specifically on the question of authority. He attempted to synthesize Aspects of Authority in the Christian Religion into "a consistent working unity."[1] Even though this was his M.A. thesis it was not the product of immaturity; Robins was in his thirty-seventh year and already had behind him two years of teaching systematic theology. In this study he examined the authority of the Bible, of Christian experience, and of Jesus. Demonstrating a myopia characteristic of his time and place, he omitted the question of the authority of the church, which to him was an issue of the past that would figure "less and less in all constructive attempts."[2] In a very fine chapter on the Bible he argued that, granting a changed view of inspiration and admitting--in fact, insisting upon--the validity of the higher criticism, the Bible still possessed a "mediate authority" which is "undisputed and indisputable: if we are ever to come to the Christ of reality and not a Christ of vagary and fancy, we must come by way of the book." In other words, "the Bible is final for its purpose," which is

> to bring us Jesus, and through Jesus to bring us to God, and it can be disputed by no other book, written or to be written; its authority is unique, an authority not simply historical, but . . . experiential as well.[3]

This leads, of course, directly to the other two points, Jesus and experience.

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[1] Aspects of Authority, p. vi. [2] Ibid., p. viii.

[3] Ibid., pp. 67, 147-48; cf. pp. 55-67.

With regard to Jesus, Robins insisted that he "was not simply the supreme exemplification of faith, but was himself its object." And such a conclusion was meant to be strictly empirical:

> As we follow the record, striving the while to keep within the bounds of the purely historical, we behold rising before us the inevitable Christ of thought, who is also the Christ of our faith--the Son of man who had power on earth to forgive sins, somehow become transcendent, the ever-living Lord of life, and we are willing to say . . . that in him was 'glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father,' and . . . that 'in him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'"[1]

Hence, Robins regarded Jesus as "revelation of God and of the will of God for us." And what Jesus revealed was not "a detailed theology or a closely formulated ethic," but the

> affinity between the human and the divine. . . . If Jesus sufficiently revealed anything concerning our relation to God, it was that there is no great gulf of 'kind' between God and men, between human nature and the divine nature.

That is, Jesus, as a revelation of God, exposed "not only the explicit model of life, but its immanent principle as well."

> And the mode in which this immanent law of life operates is not one removed in whole from conscious normal processes of the soul; the soul must apprehend the principles of Jesus' thought and life, and embrace them as the law of its own life; but their authority is thus inward and vital, not merely external and arbitrary.[2]

Thus, for Robins the significance of the historical Jesus is that he brings us to "a transcendent Christ." But the Christ is "in truth the immanent principle of normal personal life."[3] This should be borne in mind when Robins says that "the final authority which Christianity actually knows, whether in history or in experience, is the authority of God in Christ."[4] In making Christ equivalent to "the immanent principle of normal

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[1] Ibid., pp. 138, 140. [2] Ibid., pp. 142-43.

[3] Ibid., p. 105; cf. p. vii. [4] Ibid., p. 145.

personal life," Robins was suggesting as authoritative what might just as well be discovered by any developed self-consciousness wholly apart from anything having to do with Jesus of Nazareth.[1] In other words, in defining Christ as he did, he separated Christ from the Jesus of history.

What we have seen so far is that, for Robins, "the immanent principle of normal personal life" was universally authoritative and, therefore, authoritative for the Christian also. This internal principle is "the Christ." It would seem, then, that when Robins turned to consider the role of experience, as such, he must limit himself to the subjective and internal in lieu of external and more easily verifiable experience. This is precisely what he did when, like Schleiermacher, he subordinated dogma and ethics to Christian consciousness, or reason and conscience to experience.[2] This emphasis on internal experience as the ground and basis for doctrine and morality should be seen for what it is--a reaction to dogmatism and legalism--and insofar healthy. It is precisely this which made Robins give a subjective definition to Christian consciousness, or its equivalent, Christian experience: "It may be defined as comprehending 'those spiritual exercises of mind' which follow a trustful acceptance of Jesus as Lord, and which accompany obedience to his will."[3]

Once having defined experience in this way, however, Robins was not wholly consistent, and his inconsistency grew out of the basic insight that experience is not only private but also public and that the individual's isolated experience cannot be made authoritative for the community. Corporate

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[1]Cf. ibid., p. viii.

[2]"Reason and conscience are . . . mediators of the individual Christian's experience." Aspects of Authority, p. 148; cf. pp. 68-124. Cf. Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, pp. 5-12.

[3]Aspects of Authority, p. 105.

or social experience is available only secondarily, that is, only in its outward expressions, which happen to be none other than as doctrine and ethics--especially doctrine in the form of confessional utterances which supposedly embody the collective Christian consciousness of their times. In recognizing the difference between genuine piety and its outward, historically conditioned forms, Robins had in his grip a basic truth. But for the present our problem is the ambiguity in the term experience and the elusiveness of the content of experience. Plainly the creeds and the dogmas, to mention no more, are part of the external experience of the Christian church historically. Plainly, too, there were non-Christian or non-ecclesiastical factors shaping Christian experience historically, a fact of which Robins later made a great deal.[1] To some extent one can discover and study such external matters--such outward, historic experiences. But by definition these things are not what Robins was looking for, and, if he had been strictly consistent, he would not have designated such external forms "experience." This ambiguity aside, one wonders whether a corporate experience behind or under such external forms can really be discovered. For the corporate experience itself, at least in the sense that Robins defined it, is not outward but inward. Perhaps the external forms do not and cannot adequately convey to us the content of their basal experience. Perhaps they misrepresent the experience. Do we, then, find only our own? That these questions must be raised to Robins means that in a sense they are raised by him. At least he grappled with the issue and did not evade it.

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[1]Cf. esp. "Thinking Realistically about Religion," CRDS Bulletin, X (October, 1937), 5-24.

Robins work was a blend of piety and science, of evangelical experience and the experimental method. He regarded science as "a fruitful extension of common sense," and insisted that "theology should adopt, or should work out, a scientific methodology."[1] Ideally the scientific method includes "all the procedures by which ultimate objectivity, universality and verifiability are obtained." But Robins recognized that as a means of verification the method was finally limited--that is, that the scientist "is soon at the end of his tether, for non-quantitative types of probability seem to predominate in the broad field of human experience."[2] Or, as he put it on another occasion: "Experience itself, in many of its aspects, overflows the grooves and categories of the exact sciences."[3] So, whatever he did, Robins did not sell out to the scientific method, but instead made use of that method in a tentative, always cautious manner. In this, indeed, he might well have served as a model for some of his less careful contemporaries.

It will be remembered that, in his earliest published work, Robins set it down that a principal element in Jesus' revelation of God was "the affinity between the human and the divine," or "that there is no great gulf of 'kind' between God and men, between human nature and the divine nature."[4] Such language implied that immanentism which Robins later quite candidly embraced:

> Science has made it impossible to locate God anywhere but here. . . . An immanent God, difficult as it may be to save him from

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[1]"Scientific Method and the Quest for God," CRDS Bulletin, III (October, 1930), 57-58.

[2]Ibid., p. 59.

[3]"Worship in Religion," CRDS Bulletin, IX (November, 1936), 23.

[4]Aspects of Authority, p. 143.

> merging with the totality of things, is far easier to reach through religious experience than a God localized yonder.[1]

In adhering to such immanentism Robins was, of course, representative of his times, times in which the pressures of the new evolutionary view and the emphasis on immediate experience and on the scientific method made it difficult to hold to much of a doctrine of transcendence without appearing only reactionary. Robins identified himself with what he called "the higher naturalism":

> The higher naturalism [is] . . . a view which finds nature, man and God not alien to each other, which posits no sharp break between nature and the supernatural, but which believes that the values and meanings of each is resident within one system of reality.[2]

"In the human personality as we know it," Robins once said, "two realms unite, the measurable, ponderable world of science and the incommensurable, unreportable world of religion. The former is a world of measurement, the latter a world of value."[3] So, for Robins, religion was the value-producing and value-conserving aspect of life. This meant that for him, as for his colleague George Cross, religion was vindicated by its function. But it was not really "unreportable," as Robins claimed. In fact, his writings regularly demonstrate not only an ability to isolate and report on particular religious values--e.g., purity, love, service, personality[4]--but also an ability to distinguish between relative values, though it is not always clear by what criteria such discernment was practiced.

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[1]"Science in an Age of Faith," RTS Bulletin (May, 1927), 465. Cf. "Religion from Within," CRDS Bulletin, XIII (May, 1941), 121-36.

[2]"Christianity and the Humanistic Mood," Crozer Quarterly, X (April, 1933), 156.

[3]"Science in an Age of Faith," RTS Bulletin (May, 1927), 463.

[4]Cf. "The Bible in Our Religious Life," The Biblical World, L (October, 1917), 234.

Our concern now, however, is Robins' contention that religion has to do essentially with value. He applied this notion unilaterally. For example, the New Testament was for him primarily a book of religious values and Jesus was "the supreme example of the religious values of the New Testament."[1] And God was for him the referent of human values projected ultimately.[2]

As noted earlier, Professor Robins occupied not a chair but a settee at Rochester. It seems peculiarly appropriate that a son of the frontier and graduate of a great innovating institution, the University of Chicago, should be Rochester's pioneer in the new disciplines of missions, history and philosophy of religion, and religious education. Robins never claimed expertise in all these fields, but he did try to stay abreast of the rapidly expanding body of literature in them all. With respect to religious education, he always thought of himself as meeting a temporary need. He served for several years as dean of the Rochester School of Religious Education, a community project to which he and some of his colleagues donated time and talent in an endeavor to raise the level of educational achievement in the churches of the area. But undoubtedly his greatest contribution in this field was in advocating both at home and in academic circles generally that religious education should be accorded major status in the theological curriculum.[3] His appeal bore fruit at Rochester in 1923, when a separate

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[1] Ibid., pp. 234, 236. "The New Testament is not so much theology as life in terms of religion" (p. 234).

[2] "Scientific Method and the Quest for God," CRDS Bulletin, III (October, 1930), 63-64.

[3] Cf. "Theological Curriculum and a Teaching Ministry," American Journal of Theology, XXII (October, 1918), 465-78; and "Re-Organization of the Theological Seminary in the Light of the Needs of Today," Religious Education, XV (February, 1920), 29-32.

chair of religious education was established, and he was thus relieved of such responsibilities. He was now free to concentrate his energies in the study of missions and world religions.

In his investigation of world religions Robins adhered to the comparative approach. "Comparative religion" has been defined as

> that science which compares the origin, structure, and characteristics of the various religions of the world, with the view of determining their genuine agreements and differences, the measure of relation in which they stand one to another, and their relative superiority or inferiority when regarded as types. . . . Comparative religion denotes the application and product of a particular method of research, wherein, in the domain of religion, one's ultimate conclusions are arrived at by means of a series of comparisons.[1]

Robins did not himself contribute significantly to the literature in this field, but this was his approach--applying the historico-critical method, seeking agreements, differences, and relationships, and drawing conclusions of relative worth on the basis of comparisons.[2] His importance in this field lies not in primary work produced but in the fact that he opened the way for this new, untried, and essentially liberal discipline at Rochester.

His work in this area, as well as in missions, was supplemented by his close association with the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. For twenty years, 1919-1939, he was a member of the society's Board of Managers and served as its president in 1937-38. On two different occasions, in 1919-20 and again in 1928-29, he spent his sabbatical leave visiting mission stations in Asia as special representative of the society. On these

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[1]Louis Henry Jordan, Comparative Religion: Its Genesis and Growth (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905), pp. 63-64.

[2]Cf. "Historical Criticism and the Person of Gautama Buddha," RTS Bulletin (November, 1915), 4-19.

journeys he was not only the visiting preacher, lecturer, and valued counsellor, but also the sympathetic observer, student and learner. His official reports, which were influential in shaping future policies of the society, show him to have been a protagonist for change in mission work--change from the transplantation of an Americanized religion to the deliberate development of indigenous forms of the faith. He envisioned the end of paternalism and looked forward to

> an epoch of fraternity, an epoch in which the elder churches will supply the younger churches with such things as they have to give, and in which the younger will complement the experience and view of Christianity among the older churches.[1]

In 1932, in the midst of considerable fanfare, the volume entitled Re-Thinking Missions was given to the American public. This work embodied the conclusions of an interdenominational group known as the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, the chairman and moving spirit of which was Harvard philosopher William Ernest Hocking. According to this study, the norms of the missionary task are "the good of humanity" and "the highest spiritual interests of mankind," while the aim of the endeavor is not the establishment of churches but cooperation with other religions "to permeate the personal life of the individual and the fabric of human society with the creative ideals and energies which will renew and revitalize both the single units and the group."[2] Because to many readers such ideas seemed only humanistic and not Christian, the volume almost immediately became

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[1]"Achievements and Problems of Christian Missions," CRDS Bulletin, II (October, 1928), 44. Cf. also Robins, Christian Progress in the Far East: A Report of a Visit to Baptist Mission Fields, 1920-1921 (New York: American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, n.d.).

[2]Re-Thinking Missions: A Layman's Inquiry after One Hundred Years (New York: Harper, 1932), pp. 3, 4, 108-09.

the center of controversy; indeed, it was without doubt one of the most controversial literary productions of American religious liberalism. At the height of the storm Professor Robins gave the book a calm, sympathetic review. He gently chided the Laymen's Commission for seeming to suggest that "re-thinking missions" was something new, reminding his readers that "the whole missionary enterprise has been a major experiment . . . which has had to be thought and re-thought throughout its history." He then went on to delineate and to indicate his own approval of most of the proposals of the commission. He called the purported syncretism which was offensive to so many critics of the study "an advanced view," but urged its cautious application:

> No single formula can prescribe the attitude demanded by every situation. . . . One must discriminate not only between systems, but between values in a particular system. . . . There is need of a juster attitude toward non-Christian faiths than has generally prevailed.

He concluded with an expression of gratitude for the study and an appeal that we "re-think not only missions but our whole organized and personal Christianity."[1]

Robins' only significant disagreement with the study was at the point of the commission's apparent depreciation of the value of establishing churches and of preaching as integral to the missionary task.[2] Contrary to the Laymen's Commission, he insisted that the creative ideals and energies of Christianity will not be made to permeate another society apart from these ordinary traditional means. In other words, though he did not equate the spirit of Christianity with Christian institutions and though

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[1] CRDS Bulletin, V (March, 1933), 227, 232-33, 239.

[2] Ibid., pp. 234-35.

he recognized the inherent tension between the two, he also had a strong sense of the necessity of the institution and of corporate worship for the maintenance and propagation of the very Christian spirit that one would have permeate society. Thus, he would retain the visible church and not eliminate preaching. "The very ceremonial of religion," he once said, "tends to mechanize it, yet the lack of stated religious observances ends in the neglect of religion."[1] In this concern for Christian institutions and worship Robins was both more traditional and more catholic than his colleague, George Cross, though he was not therefore less in touch with his contemporary situation and was by no means a mere traditionalist.[2]

In a very remarkable address delivered in 1931 Robins fairly well charted his own understanding of the nature of Christianity. He admitted quite frankly that many within and without the church looked upon it as having nothing serious "to offer toward the solution of the real problems of our day, whether in the realm of thought or the field of action." He knew that to such persons Christianity seemed "perpetually obscurantist in its methods and attitudes, thinking to wave difficulties aside by increased unction and an emphasis upon trite phrases." Still, Robins maintained, Christianity could "go on for generations by its very traditional and institutional momentum." But that, as he saw it, would be the perpetuation of an anachronism. Christianity, he argued must become "completely contemporaneous"--but <u>not</u> by embracing "some current version of science" or "some

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[1]"The Minister Himself: Six Paradoxes," <u>CRDS Bulletin</u>, II (June, 1930), 400.

[2]Cf. "Poems and Hymns by Henry Burke Robins," <u>CRDS Bulletin</u>, XXI (May, 1949), 17-30. Much as the hymns point to an interest in corporate worship the poems point to a concern for the cultivation of a private devotional life. Cf. "The Development of the Minister in His Devotional Life," <u>RTS Bulletin</u> (January, 1914), 12-17.

particular contemporary philosophy." Instead, it must become contemporaneous simply by being itself--"a living community of experience rather than a moribund tradition." And for this "the test is one of continuity of spirit rather than of identity of pattern." Robins then proceeded in a very compelling way to speak of Christianity as

> a chief spiritual adventure of the race. It is clearly an experiment. Nor is it likely ever to lose this experimental character, so long as it keeps close to life. It has been experimental in the forms and institutions which it has elaborated; in the theory of the ministry . . . ; in the field of piety . . . ; in the formulation and emphasis of its doctrines; in the attempts it has made to meet new needs in changing social situations. . . . It has been inevitably experimental, every theory of patterns once-for-all delivered to the contrary notwithstanding. Can it now become consciously, avowedly, scientifically experimental, in an age dominated by the experimental temper?[1]

That final question whether Christianity can "now become consciously avowedly, scientifically experimental, in an age dominated by the experimental temper"--that question is indeed one of the really grand questions facing the church in the twentieth century. Certainly the raising of that question is one of the signal contributions of liberals like Robins. There is a new recognition--a new insistance--that Christianity is at heart really a great experiment in redemption, asking over again in every generation whether in a world like ours suffering love can triumph. Is not religious liberalism--in its emphasis on experience and on present redemption, in its development of and adherance to the scientific method, in its recognition of the reality of process, in its challenging of traditional patterns and formulations, in its encouragement to the prophetic minority, even in its questions about authority--in all of this, is not religious liberalism calling the church back to something very central and fundamental

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[1]"Concerning Culture and the Future of Religion," CRDS Bulletin, IV (November, 1931), 114-15.

that is, the essentially experimental nature of the Christian faith? It may be that many or most of the liberals were as conscious of this as was Professor Robins himself, but the matter was only rarely articulated with such clarity and passion as he commanded. Hear him again:

> If now, funding the great experiences of the past for the light which they may cast upon the future, we could face forward; if we could achieve a more vivid sense of the emerging spiritual values of the time in which we live; if we could dare the cross-currents of culture which perplex and confuse many thoughtful minds in our day by a new venture of creative faith, a fresh oblation of Christian love, finding God in the hot confusion of it all rather than in the quiet garden in the cool of some Edenic morning away back yonder; we should be brought near to the unmatched Figure whose name we bear, and to the great human majority whom he loved. What would it be like once again to live by faith and not by formula, as for brief moments in creative epochs of religious history men have done! Our certainty has to do with but few things and they the great essentials. If we are sure of God, and no mere argument ever made anyone sure of him, if we discover in the midst of life's urgency the kind of God whom Jesus made so unforgettably real to the beloved community in the first days, we shall have the basis of all religious assurance. If the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ becomes experimentally the great focal reality, then the cosmic order will bear a spiritual interpretation and personality become the consummating value and the plastic and revealing instrument of a purpose mightier than our own. If we treat human personality as the consummating value of the cosmic order, it will, so far as we dare go, prove to be just that; if we treat men as machines, we may thrust them down from the mark, but time will rebuke us and show our judgment false. . . . Love is the greatest thing in the world, and the adventure of Redemptive Love must be consummated. The problem of the modern Christian, who has become so sophisticated about many things, is to keep a simple focal faith and an ardent Christian love. He is free from the letter of every legalism, but bound by the claim of God and his brother to the end of the ages. He is free to interpret by the use of new intellectual categories, but bound, as free, to use the instruments of his freedom for its very maintenance.[1]

Professor Robins concluded by suggesting that the church vindicate its continued existence by accepting as its own the law of love. "Why talk of a world-conquering love unless love conquers us?"[2] Here, it seems to me, is American religious liberalism at its best.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 115-16. [2] Ibid., p. 121.

It is interesting to see how Robins caught up in himself so many of the themes and emphases of the liberal thought of his time. We have noted his overriding concern for the experimental method and the tentativeness with which he articulated his own conclusions. And we have seen how he pioneered at Rochester the new disciplines of religious education, missions, and comparative religions. It might also be added that he was Rochester's pioneer in the psychology of religion, for he stayed abreast of the literature in this vast new field and made ample use of its insights in his own work.[1] He was an ecumenical Christian,[2] who recognized the social conditioning of all religion,[3] and knew the need for a universal faith.[4] He lived a long life--long enough to take a few swipes at neo-orthodoxy[5]--and to the very end he was in a large measure a personification of the liberal spirit. He was the liberal's liberal--not in being on the extreme edge of things, but in providing in himself, in his work and in his temperament, a ready model--a model of the blending of the scientific and the evangelical.

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[1]Cf. "The Significance of Psychology for the Interpretation of Religious Experience," Biblical World, XLV (February, 1915), 82-93; "Points of View in Contemporary Psychology," RTS Bulletin (November, 1922), 49-58; "The Development and Present Status of the Psychology of Religion," ibid. (May, 1923), 49-59; "Psychology and the History of Religion," ibid. (May, 1924), 29-48.

[2]Cf. "The Communion of Saints," CRDS Bulletin, X (December, 1937), 94-105.

[3]Cf. "Thinking Realistically about Religion," ibid. (October, 1937), 5-24; passim.

[4]Cf. "The Shaping of Things to Come," ibid., XV (February, 1943), 99-116; "The Hunger for a World Faith," in Christian Leadership in a World Society, ed. J. W. Nixon and W. S. Hudson (Rochester: CRDS, 1945).

[5]Cf. "Christian Faith and the Common Life: A Footnote," CRDS Bulletin, XI (December, 1938), 67-73; "On Being Realistic in Religion," Crozer Quarterly, XVI (April, 1939), 106-16.

IV

The third addition to the faculty during Stewart's interim administration was Ernest W. Parsons.[1] An Englishman by birth and a Canadian by rearing, Parsons became an American by choice. He was educated for the ministry at McMaster University, then served seven years as pastor of the Baptist church at Port Arthur, Ontario, before going on to the University of Chicago from which he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy summa cum laude in 1912. At Chicago he was the student of such men as Ernest DeWitt Burton, Clyde W. Votaw, and Edgar J. Goodspeed, but he chose the youthful Shirley Jackson Case--only a few months his senior--to guide his graduate studies, being in fact the first to be directed by Professor Case. Regarding this, Case later said:

> To him the choice must have seemed a dangerous venture and to me it was a grave challenge. . . . But I soon discovered that in this instance the task was comparatively simple. The student proved quite capable of guiding himself and together we engaged in a mutual effort to discover truth. . . . Certainly he contributed quite as much to my quest for new knowledge as I did to his.[2]

When Parsons retired in 1941 Case welcomed him "to the dignity of emeritus" and recommended "that it be conferred summa cum laude."[3]

Professor Case's compliment was based upon Parsons' work over three decades, during which he acquired an enviable reputation as a front-rank biblical scholar in America. And almost the whole of his professional career was spent at Rochester. Upon receipt of his doctorate in 1912 he went to Brandon College in Manitoba where he taught English and sociology

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[1]For biographical details, cf. CRDS Bulletin, I (November, 1928), 94-95; and XIII (May, 1941), 109-110.

[2]S. J. Case, "Professor Parsons as a Graduate Student," CRDS Bulletin XIII (May, 1941), 137.

[3]Ibid., p. 139.

for one year, then he spent a year as professor of New Testament interpretation at the Pacific Theological Seminary in Berkeley (now Pacific School of Religion). In the fall of 1914 he began his work at Rochester. For four years he occupied the chair of English Bible and biblical languages, then for the balance of his public career was professor of New Testament interpretation.

Already when he came to Rochester Parsons had done pioneer work in New Testament criticism, delineating "some non-Markan elements" in the Gospel according to Luke.[1] This was his doctoral thesis, about which Professor Case said in 1941:

> He went beyond the customary procedure of comparing the several gospels with one another as a means of discovering the primary literary stratum and attacked the more novel question of the problem-situation in the life of the early Christian communities where the immediate needs of the new religion shaped tradition that later crystallized into literary form in the gospels. Thus he opened up the whole problem of Sitz im Leben, of which so much is made nowadays by the advocates of Formgeschichte. But in this he was twenty years ahead of his time, and consequently later researches in this field have pretty generally failed to perceive that their main contention had already been convincingly presented in Professor Parsons' thesis.[2]

The new thing which Parsons did was to adhere to a method for New Testament study which sought to account for "the immediate circumstances of the writing, with regard both to the writer and to those to whom the document was directed." Such a method was based on the assumption that the New Testament writings "were produced in some definite historical situation and to meet some specific need which is reflected more or less clearly on their pages." Thus, the "problem-situation" was regarded as "a

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[1]Cf. Parsons, A Historical Examination of Some Non-Markan Elements in Luke (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1914).

[2]CRDS Bulletin, XIII (May, 1941), 138.

valuable touchstone" for a proper understanding of the biblical literature. "The method pursued," Parsons said,

> will be to interrogate the various sections of the material with a view to discovering the purpose which it was designed to serve and to find the situation into which it fits with the greatest degree of probability. It is claimed that if certain sections manifest aptitude to serve certain purposes and such purposes which needed serving can be located in time and place we shall be justified in giving grave consideration to the possibility of those sections having arisen in oral or literary form at that time and in that location.[1]

In the practice of this method Parsons was more an historian than a literary critic as such--that is, he was not so much concerned with isolating and identifying literary forms as with describing the historical situation that produced and conditioned the literature we now possess.[2] In other words, he was an adherent and pioneer of what came to be called the social investigation of primitive Christianity.[3] This method was genetic in that it sought to get at the history behind the tradition. And it was functional in that literary forms and especially doctrinal ideas were explained by reference to their function in filling particular needs. In short, this method was not so much a hermeneutical device--a way of interpreting scripture for the present--as a means of accounting for both the fact and the form of biblical literature according to environmental factors.

Examples of the application of this method are abundant in the writings of Professor Parsons.[4] We here examine but one, namely his

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[1] An Historical Examination, pp. 9, 12, 13.

[2] Cf. his admirable survey and illustration of form criticism, "Recent Advances in the Study of the Gospels," CRDS Bulletin, VII (November, 1935), 17-26, and VIII (March, 1936), 173-83.

[3] The classic statement of this method was given by Parsons' teacher and friend, Shirley Jackson Case, in his brilliant article on "The Historical Study of Religion," Journal of Religion, I (January, 1921), 1-17, and as reprinted in ibid., XXIX (January, 1949), 5-14.

[4] E.g., "John the Baptist and Jesus," in Studies in Early Christianity, ed. S. J. Case (New York: The Century Co., 1928), pp. 151-70; "A Neglected

treatment of "Some Pragmatic Elements in the Gospel of Matthew."[1] This particular Gospel nowhere contains an explicit statement of purpose. Therefore, relates Parsons,

> it has often been assumed that no purpose other than that of giving the actual historical narrative of the career of Jesus is present. . . . We shall seek to discover in the Gospel of Matthew some of the interests which appear in that Gospel and which probably account for its use as well as its form and arrangement.[2]

The conclusion to which Parsons comes on the basis of his examination is that the overriding concern of the author of the Gospel is to present the strongest case possible for the Messiahship of Jesus in order to counter the outspoken opposition of Jewish critics. The whole of the Gospel, both as to the matter and the manner of its content, is given to this end. Thus, there is appeal to the Jewish scriptures, showing in what manner Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecies. And Jesus' failure to win acceptance by the people is attributed to "their willful refusal to accept a gracious invitation while the equally perplexing question of the Gentile mission and evangelization is pictured as a decree of God." Then, Jesus' genealogy is traced not only to David but all the way back to Abraham, father of the covenant and the one to whom the universal blessing was given; in this way "the Gentile inclusion in the blessings of the gospel receives explanation and support." Furthermore, says Parsons, "it is that Jewish opposition to Christians and Christianity . . . which accounts for the emphasis in our Gospel upon Jesus' rebuke of the Jewish

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Document," CRDS Bulletin, III (March, 1931), 267-76; "The New Testament and the Origin of Jesus," in The Process of Religion: Essays in Honor of Dean Shailer Mathews, ed. M. H. Krumbine (New York: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 227-47; "The Significance of John the Baptist for the Beginnings of Christianity," in Environmental Factors in Christian History, ed. John T. McNeill (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), pp. 1-17.

[1]"Some Pragmatic Elements in the Gospel of Matthew," Crozer Quarterly, VI (October, 1929), 397-408.

[2]Ibid., p. 401.

religious leaders."[1] And the ecclesiological references as well as the documentation of Jesus' resurrection are taken as additional links in the chain of apologetic interest that courses through the book.

Parsons summarized the results of his study as follows:

> Enough has been said to suggest that our evangelist used material which had taken form in response to certain situations for which a word of Jesus was needed for guidance or in connection with certain controversial questions. The evangelists themselves shaped their material for their own practical purposes which were doubtless clearly in their minds. They were commending their gospel to the needs and challenges of their day to the best of their consecrated ability. . . . It is becoming increasingly clear . . . that no adequate understanding of the Gospel is possible without a sympathetic recognition of the various needs which were present to the mind of the writer and of the dominant purpose of the whole document which was to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of divine promise.[2]

Thus, Parsons demonstrates very well his main thesis--that the "apologetic interest" was uppermost in the production of this Gospel.

This methodology is considerable gain over the earlier attempts to use the same materials for a "scissors and paste"[3] biography of Jesus. Obviously, with the likes of Parsons, biblical criticism had advanced well beyond the method of positivistic history which sought facts for their own sake. For Parsons, as for the eminent form critics of the continent, the original quest of the historical Jesus was a dead issue. Parsons advanced beyond many of his contemporaries in being more empirical, but he was not empirical enough. If his empiricism was broad in its application, it was not all-inclusive; if it was thorough, it was not wholly so. For instance, with respect to the Gospel of Matthew, he very ably delineated its apologetic interest and its central theme of Jesus as Messiah. But too much seems

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[1] Ibid., pp. 404-05. [2] Ibid., pp. 407-08.

[3] On the "scissors and paste" methodology, cf. R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 257-61.

to be explained by reference to the environment, especially to Jewish animosity and to a sort of implicit anti-Semitism on the part of the evangelist. That is, Parsons seems to account for too much by merely sociological factors to the rather general neglect of the author's theological concern. Parsons did not treat his material theologically, but he did help prepare the way for such by indicating the close relation between the biblical literature and the common life of the early Christians.

Parsons was fond of saying that "the student of the New Testament has changed from the exegete of a literature to the interpreter of a movement."[1] In this connection he pointed out that

> the chronological area of New Testament study has been increased from approximately one century to four or five, while the range of research has enlarged itself from that of a comparatively small group and a small literature to the history of the political, social, religious and literary movements of the entire Graeco-Roman world, For it is clearly recognized that Christianity did not come to birth and adolescence in a vacuum.[2]

It was with this in mind that he could say regarding the New Testament that "nothing is really known until it is known historically."[3] Or, as he elsewhere put it:

> One of the first steps toward an intelligent use of the Bible is the recognition that knowledge of its contents as such is not sufficient to assure a wise and proper use of it as a moral and spiritual guide in the world of today and tomorrow. . . . At least a general knowledge of the historical circumstances surrounding its various documents is necessary. Some understanding of the literary methods obtaining in the various times and places

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[1]Cf. "The New Testament Today and Tomorrow," RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 165; and "Some Pragmatic Elements," Crozer Quarterly, VI (October, 1929), 395.

[2]Ibid., p. 395.

[3]"The New Testament Today and Tomorrow," RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 179.

> of their production is indispensable. A measure of sympathetic knowledge of the religious and practical purposes of its documents is equally desirable. This is a minimum requirement.[1]

If what Parsons mentioned is a "minimum requirement" for an intelligent use of the Bible, it is also a problem--the problem of whether the Bible can indeed be used wisely by any but the technical scholar. Is the book finally shut up to all but erudite critics? Parsons certainly recognized this difficulty and often addressed himself to its solution,[2] demonstrating his concern for the proper use of the Bible by the man in the pulpit as well as the man in the pew. The responsibility of the biblical critic as Parsons saw it was to make the fruits of his scholarship available in a form digestible by Mister Everyman. And this he himself sought to do with the publication in 1939 of The Religion of the New Testament, a volume "intended primarily for Christian ministers and laymen."[3] The book was finely worked to achieve its communicative purpose, and it may be rightly called the summation of Parsons' life work. We note two characteristics of the volume because they are also general characteristics of the liberal biblical scholarship of the time. First, the subject is not the theology or theologies of the New Testament, but the religion, indicating that Parsons was more interested in religious experience than doctrine, in practice more than in reflection. The second characteristic grows out of the first, namely that Parsons was concerned to delineate the varieties and/or stages of religion in the New Testament in a manner calculated to

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[1]"The Bible in a World Perspective," in Christian Leadership in a World Society, ed. J. W. Nixon and W. S. Hudson, pp. 173-74.

[2]Cf. "The Understanding of the Bible or Biblical Criticism," RTS Bulletin (November, 1916), 3-23; "The New Testament Today and Tomorrow," ibid.,(May, 1925), 193-97; "The Minister and His New Testament," ibid. (November, 1927), 60-74; "The Use of the Bible Today," CRDS Bulletin, XI (December, 1938), 53-66.

[3]The Religion of the New Testament (New York: Harper, 1939), p. ix.

exemplify their differences and similarities. Thus, the religion of Jesus was discussed apart from that of the gospels, though Parsons admitted some difficulty making this distinction. Then, in turn, the pre-Pauline, the Pauline, the Synoptic--and others--were examined, with a chapter on each of eight different types. So we see that the word "religion" in the title of the book might more accurately have been pluralized.[1]

Parsons concluded his study by asserting that the New Testament, because of its manifest diversity, is not a religious norm, but consists rather of "dynamic and inspiring interpretations, starting points from which we, in deep and grateful appreciation of the past, must make our own essays in religious understanding and achievement."[2] The recognition of this diversity of religious practice--and of theological viewpoint--in the New Testament was one of the major contributions of liberal biblical criticism. Admittedly, the variety could be overplayed at the expense of distorting the underlying unity of the biblical literature, but the acceptance of the fact of this diversity meant the end to a necessarily artificial harmonization of conflicting accounts. And an understanding of the diversity in unity within the Bible enables Christians in an ecumenical age to accept with a bit more grace contemporary religious and theological differences.

With Parsons in the chair of New Testament interpretation at Rochester the liberal themes and emphases in biblical studies received forthright

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[1]Parsons own title, I am told, was The Religions of the New Testament. The publisher made the change, dropping the plural.

[2]Ibid., p. 266. The main points of Parsons' volume were anticipated by him in an earlier article on "Some Early Interpretations of Jesus," CRDS Bulletin, IV (March, 1932), 265-80.

and sympathetic treatment in the course of study. With him the scientific method was used as a tool for exposing the social and historical factors which conditioned the biblical literature. Traditional views of authorship, date, and origin were retained only if substantiated by the evidence. Detailed linguistic analysis gave way to the study of the New Testament as expressive of a movement. And no longer was the whole subordinated to or required to produce some grand system of doctrine. As Parsons put it, "the modern New Testament curriculum is a much broader and richer one than was the older type and there are changed emphases."[1] The "richer" offering and "changed emphases" Parsons continued to make at Rochester from 1914 until his retirement in 1941.

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Cross, Robins, and Parsons--these were the men brought to the Rochester faculty during Stewart's administration. It will be remembered that Stewart himself was a Canadian. Cross also hailed from Canada, and Parsons had been reared there. All three of the newcomers were products of the University of Chicago. In fact Robins and Parsons had been awarded their doctorates simultaneously--both summa cum laude!--and had developed a close friendship during their days of graduate study together. The coming of these three completed the transition to liberalism at Rochester. It remains to be shown briefly some of the further effects of this change during the brief term of office of Dean Stewart.

The faculty changes were the most obvious but by no means the only changes during these years. For instance, in 1913 a series of summer

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[1]"The New Testament Today and Tomorrow," RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 193.

sessions sponsored jointly by the Rochester and Colgate seminaries was begun, thus initiating a relationship which finally led to the merger of the two schools in 1928. And this beginning was principally the work of Dean Stewart. Also, during these days certain steps were taken to make the school more autonomous and at the same time to give the faculty a larger control over academic concerns--such as the virtual elimination of the one-time influential Examining Committee,[1] and the assumption by the faculty of full responsibility for "all publications of the seminary,"[2] as well as for the selection of commencement speakers.[3] Then, there were a host of more incidental changes that indicate the temper of the times--like the relaxation of regulations forbidding financial aid to married students, the arrangement of monthly instead of quarterly payment of faculty salaries, and the equipping of the seminary with telephones.[4]

One other change of major importance was made during this period, a change which Professor Moehlman in 1926 designated "a creative adventure and the most progressive action thus far taken in the history of the seminary."[5] He referred to the reconstruction of the curriculum, a task carried out under the direction of Professors Betteridge, Rauschenbusch, and Cross. Under the revised course of study which became effective in 1913 the old departments were abolished and all the courses were arranged in

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[1]Cf. Minutes of the Executive Committee, October 6, 1913, and November 3, 1913; Minutes of the Faculty, November 7, 1913; RTS Bulletin (May, 1913), 35.

[2]Minutes of the Executive Committee, December 1, 1913, and February 2, 1914.

[3]Minutes of the Faculty, December 5, 1913.

[4]I was told that A. H. Strong would allow only one telephone on the premises and that in a public corridor. For Stewart's own catalogue of the changes during his administration, cf. RTS Bulletin (June, 1915), 34-36.

[5]"The Story of the Curriculum," RTS Bulletin (November, 1926), 276.

four groups--biblical, historical, systematic, and practical. Courses were added in the psychology of religion, comparative religion, philosophy of religion, religious education, and sociology, while the offerings in biblical theology, biblical criticism, English Bible, missions, and ethics were enriched. The number of prescribed courses was decreased and the elective offerings expanded, and for the first time in the school's history it became possible to earn a degree without having studied the Hebrew language. Thus, a thoroughly revised curriculum was adopted, a curriculum tailored to "the demands of today" and looked upon as "the achievement of the interim."[1]

These were the years of Acting President J. W. A. Stewart, years when, as Moehlman saw it, "a backward-looking school" was transformed into "a forward-looking school in close contact with the thinking of the modern world." Moehlman continued enthusiastically:

> Dr. Stewart helped convert a seventeenth-century type of theology into a twentieth-century religion and initiated studies which issued in a curriculum which for years was at the head of the American divinity school procession. He understood how to get his colleagues to agree or at least to compromise in the interest of progress. And no three years [in the school's history] show comparable advance.[2]

Obviously, Stewart came to the kingdom for such a time as this, and one cannot but wonder from the perspective of half-a-century why he was not promoted from acting president to actual president. The fact is that he was not. Probably at the age of sixty-three he was deemed too old. Whatever the trustees had in mind with respect to Stewart, they set down in their official report for 1915: "When the history of the seminary is written the three years of his administration will have an honorable place."[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 280; cf. pp. 276-80; and "The Achievement of the Interim," RTS Bulletin (May, 1913), 1.

[2] CRDS Bulletin, XX (February, 1948), 132-33.

[3] RTS Bulletin (June, 1915), 20.

CHAPTER VI

LIBERALISM AT ROCHESTER: 1915-1928

In the preceding chapter it was shown how the transition to liberalism was completed at the Rochester Seminary by 1915. One major accomplishment of those years yet remains to be assessed--the selection of Clarence Augustus Barbour[1] as the institution's new president. In the present chapter we will get acquainted with Barbour and will traverse with him the length and breadth of the domain over which he presided for fourteen years. We will examine internal relations at the school, as well as find out how President Strong fared during his retirement years. And we will pay considerable attention to the influence of the seminary and its relationship to its constituency during what was surely the stormiest period of its history.

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C. A. Barbour was no stranger to the seminary when he assumed the presidency in 1915. To its halls he had come as a youthful Phi Beta Kappa

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[1]Born at Hartford, Connecticut, April 21, 1867. B.A., Brown University, 1888; graduated, RTS, 1891. Pastor of the Lake Avenue Baptist Church, Rochester, 1891-1909. International Secretary, Y.M.C.A. of North America, 1909-1915. At RTS: president and Wyckoff professor of homiletics, 1915-28. At CRDS: president and professor of homiletics, 1928-29. President of Brown University, 1929-37. Died at Providence, Rhode Island, January 16, 1937. For additional information on Barbour, cf. A. W. Beaven, "Clarence A. Barbour," The Standard (June 19, 1915), 1308-09; RTS Bulletin (May, 1915), 3-8; CRDS Bulletin, I (November, 1928), 84-85; ibid. (May, 1929), 237-50; ibid., IX (May, 1937), 237-44.

graduate of Brown University. At Brown he had been the student of E. G. Robinson, and now he came to study with A. H. Strong. Upon the completion of his theological studies in 1891 he had not left Rochester but had become pastor of the Lake Avenue Baptist Church, which over the next eighteen years he built into one of the city's leading churches, while himself acquiring considerable local renown as a social reformer. Through the 1890's he was a forceful and effective leader in campaigns for temperance, good government, and efficient operation of the public schools. By the time he resigned from this one and only pastoral charge in 1909, the Rochester Evening News could frankly assert editorially that "if it were put to a vote . . . Clarence A. Barbour would come pretty close to being selected as that citizen of Rochester whom Rochester would least like to lose."[1] In fact, the city did not lose him--only the church, which he left to take an executive post with the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association. His new Y.M.C.A. duties required him to travel far and near, especially in connection with the "Men and Religion Forward Movement," but permitted him to retain his Rochester residence. During the six years of this work he became widely known as a public speaker, especially for men and youth. And already he had been "doctored," receiving the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Rochester in 1901 and Brown in 1909.[2]

Meanwhile, during his years as pastor and as Y.M.C.A. executive, Barbour became more closely identified with the seminary. He was an active member of the Board of Trustees and its Executive Committee from 1896

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[1]Quoted in CRDS Bulletin, I (May, 1929), 241-42.

[2]He was likewise honored by Williams College in 1920 and Colgate University in 1922. Syracuse conferred upon him the Doctor of Sacred Theology in 1921, and Denison University the Doctor of Laws in 1922.

onwards. At the death of Professor Pattison in 1904 he briefly took up the reins in the homiletics department; he was then invited to join the faculty but declined.[1] In 1911 the search for a successor to President Strong was begun; after three years the special committee charged with this task had failed to solve the problem. Finally, in May of 1914, the matter was left with the standing Committee on Instruction, a committee then chaired by Barbour who was also at that time president of the Board, a position he held for two years, 1913 to 1915. According to the official report of the trustees, Barbour and his committee set about the task assigned them

> by addressing a communication to all the members of the Board of Trustees, the members of the faculty and to prominent alumni requesting them to suggest their choice for the presidency of the seminary. . . . The name of Dr. Barbour was by far the most prominent of any suggested. The four other members of the committee agreed with this judgment so completely that . . . they urged upon Dr. Barbour the consideration of the office. A second letter was sent to many of the alumni representing eighty-five different cities asking their judgment as to Dr. Barbour in relation to the presidency. The answer to these letters was so conclusive that Dr. Barbour was constrained to consider the call and to agree to the presentation of his name.[2]

The upshot of it all was that on January 26, 1915, Clarence A. Barbour was elected to the presidency and the chair of homiletics.

There was, however, considerably more behind the scenes of Barbour's election than the official trustee report indicates. On January 9, 1915, after it had become clear that he was going to be nominated for the presidency, Barbour wrote to A. H. Strong in Florida recounting at length what had transpired, how the majority of the trustees and alumni and all of the

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[1] Cf. Annual Report of the Union, 1904, p. 20.

[2] RTS Bulletin (June, 1915), 17.

faculty favored his election, and that the only real opposition had come from two members of the Board of Trustees. Barbour closed his letter with an appeal for Strong's approval:

> I should be very sorry to have any such action as proposed taken by the Board of Trustees without your approval. You need not express this approval to the Board unless you see fit to do so. . . . If I take up the seminary work, I would account it the deepest and gravest misfortune if I were to do so without absolutely clear sky between you and me.[1]

In his letter of reply Strong stated that he wished he "could respond as definitely" as Barbour desired, but added:

> I resolved when I resigned the presidency to exert no influence with regard to the choice of my successor, and I think it wise still to adhere to that resolution. I will support and stand by any man who the Board of Trustees may select, and if they select you, you may count on my loyal backing.

Strong mentioned certain "gifts" which admirably fitted Barbour for the task--"energy and pulpit ability, and warmth of temperament and powers of leadership"--then hastened to venture "in strict confidence . . . three suggestions which I think might remove all the obstacles to your election." Each suggestion grew out of an objection to Barbour, the first of which was his membership in the Masons. Strong reminded him of the scandalous history of anti-Masonic sentiment in Rochester and suggested that he resign from the order. The second objection, said Strong, was that Barbour was a politician who might introduce "the methods of the boss and the machine." The proposed remedy was a forthright declaration of faith in democracy and of intention to be not a dictator but "the organ of the Board." But the third objection was the most serious, namely that some thought Barbour

> too much under the influence of the Chicago school of theology. It is said that the recent appointments to professorships are all of men who are unwilling to say that they believe in the

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[1]Letter of Barbour to Strong, January 9, 1915.

> pre-existence, deity, virgin birth, miracles, physical resurrection, objective atonement, omnipresence of Jesus Christ. The Chicago men, it is said, are practical Unitarians, and that the seminary has already gone over to the unevangelical wing of Christendom. Since you have not stemmed the tide, but have helped it on,[1] you are under suspicion as thinking more of the temporary popularity of the institution than of its conformity to the Scriptural model. You could easily set yourself right in this respect by standing up in your inaugural address and in your homiletical instruction for the old-fashioned evangelical faith.

Strong entreated Barbour to make these concessions in order to unite the Board in his favor, and concluded: "I do not wish to have any part in the election."[2]

On January 18, but eight days before his formal election, Barbour replied to Strong, taking up each of the three objections in turn. As for the first, he regarded the anti-Masonic sentiment as dead and not in need of resurrecting. The second he looked upon as a holdover reaction to his part in the controversial good-government campaign of the 1890's. He reviewed his record and insisted that his own life "ought to speak more clearly than any declaration" for democracy that he might make. With respect to the third objection--the charge that he was "too much under the influence of the Chicago school"--Barbour reported that in Y.M.C.A. circles he was "universally ranked as a member of the conservative wing." Then he mentioned an address given before an alumni gathering in which he had

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[1]This point is substantiated in a letter of October 21, 1914, in which Betteridge appealed to Barbour to accept the "call" to be the seminary's new president. Said Betteridge: "Largely through your efforts a faculty has been assembled here that is second to none in the country, a harmonious, enthusiastic, devoted body of men. . . . They want you to lead them." The reference is to Barbour's work on the Committee on Instruction.

[2]Letter of Strong to Barbour, January 13, 1915.

set forth "the fundamental truths of the gospel" which should receive "strong and persistent emphasis in the teaching and life of the seminary." He quoted correspondence in which he was asked to repeat this "summary of the fundamentals of the Christian creed," which he did under the following points:

> 1. The reality of sin, and the separation which sin makes from a man's best self, from his best friends, from the highest possibilities of his life, from his God.
> 2. Man's need of a savior from sin.
> 3. The reality of the atonement of Christ, as a redemptive work and as a dynamic. It is of little use to free men from the guilt of sin, unless there be the impartation of power to lead a life victorious over sin.
> 4. The imperativeness of the claims of Christ upon men.
> 5. The unique and incomparable deity of Christ.
> 6. Without insistence upon some specific theory of inspiration, the absolute uniqueness of the Bible as the Word of God.
> 7. The present and active power of the Spirit of God in the revelation of God to man, in the enforcement upon reason and conscience and will of man's need of God, and in constant inspiration to Christian living and Christian service.[1]

The repetition of these points Barbour considered a sufficient answer to the third objection reported by Strong. Barbour's long letter closed with a pledge that he had not and would not violate Strong's confidence, but that he had extracted word for word the statement of the three objections to himself so that they might be fully considered by the members of the Committee on Instruction.

This interesting exchange reveals as much about Strong's state of mind as about Barbour. Undoubtedly the objections to Barbour were really Strong's as much as anyone else's. The first two were the objections of an old man who had for all his days in this city of his birth been part of the Protestant establishment and who could still recall the bitterness of the anti-Masonic strife and the turmoil of the local political squabbles.

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[1]Letter of Barbour to Strong, January 18, 1915.

But the third objection must surely have been the most vital, for now Strong thought he saw his beloved seminary being cut loose from its evangelical moorings. If these objections were really those of Strong himself, he did nonetheless speak also for some of the trustees, for when the vote was finally taken three opposed Barbour.[1]

When Barbour became president it must have been with the personal satisfaction that he had played both ends against the middle. What was lacking in Strong's charge that Barbour was a politician was the word "skilled." Barbour was a politician and an extraordinarily capable one. With regard to him, Strong was simply learning what Tocqueville had set down, that in America you "meet a politician where you expected to find a priest."[2] It might be too much to say that Barbour was already campaigning for the presidency when he addressed the alumni in May, 1914, on "the fundamental truths of the gospel," but one cannot help admiring the skill with which he dealt with the ticklish matter of his relation to A. H. Strong. He set out to win the high prize of the old gentleman's full favor, but, failing that answered Strong's objections while declining his suggestions, then played those objections for all they were worth with the trustees without at the same time violating a confidence. At very least Barbour insured that neither Strong nor anyone else could later throw those original objections back in his face. The fact is, of course, that while the anti-Masonic bit was increasingly irrelevant, the other two objections were essentially true--which is not, of course, to agree that they pointed to any defect in Barbour's character or to any flaw which made him

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[1]The official tally was nineteen "yea" and three "nay," after an informal ballot of seventeen to five. Minutes of the Board of Trustees, January 26, 1915.

[2]Tocqueville, Democracy in America, I, p. 317.

ill-fitted for the job at hand at the time. It just is true, as his whole public career demonstrates, that Barbour was a skilled manipulator as well as a theological liberal.

It would hardly be right to call Barbour a scientific modernist after the Chicago pattern, though he was always favorable to such. He himself was an evangelical liberal who made a great deal of experienced religion and very little of the subtleties of dogma. "The day in which we live," he wrote in 1914,

> is a day of impatience with trifles and of swift movement to a practical point. The road is strewn with discarded questions in religious thinking. The churches have swept past many of them. The great doctrines of faith stand in their integrity; but not a few, once regarded as important, have vanished.[1]

Those "great doctrines of faith" which still stand Barbour liked to refer to on such occasions as opening ceremonies, commencement exercises, alumni gatherings, and denominational meetings. And, whatever the occasion, the great centralities of the faith always came out just about as he had recited them to A. H. Strong in that letter of the eve of his election to the presidency.[2]

Strong had been principally a theoretician and speculative scholar. Barbour was, by contrast, essentially an activist. His annual reports always bulged with statistics about the miles he had traveled and the addresses he had given in hosts of places to multitudes of persons.[3] He

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[1]"The Responsibility of the Pulpit in Dealing Directly with the Ethical Questions of Today," Religious Education, IX (February, 1914), 6.

[2]Cf. Barbour's inaugural address, RTS Bulletin (December, 1915), 29-43. Cf. also ibid. (May, 1915), 26-28; (May, 1920), 10-17; (June, 1924), 75-76; (June, 1925), 281-91; passim.

[3]In RTS Bulletin (June, 1919), 34-35, he summed up the travels of a decade: "It has been a part of the method which I have followed during the years to keep an accurate record of the miles which I have traversed, and I am able, with gratitude to God for his sustaining care, to tell you

was not really an academician and never professed to be. Aside from sermons and addresses, he wrote very little, though he did compile two hymnals[1] and two symposia[2] for the Y.M.C.A. He was a man of genuine humanity with a sincere interest in others, a trait which won for him a very wide retinue of friends in both academic and ecclesiastical circles. This capacity for friendliness was matched by an uncommon leadership ability, which within his own denomination he received ample opportunity to demonstrate. In 1916, but one year after taking the reins at the seminary, he was elected president of the Northern Baptist Convention--the seventh man so honored and only the second clergyman. Always a supporter of education, he was, more than any other individual, responsible for the establishment in 1910 of the denomination's Board of Education, on which he sat from the beginning and chaired from 1925 until his death. In 1924 he was his denomination's fraternal delegate to the Baptist Union of Great Britian and Ireland. And over the years he occupied a host of other responsible offices. In fact, with the exception of his six years with the Y.M.C.A., his entire public life was given in service to his own denomination.[3]

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that between the first of May, 1909, and the first of May, 1919, I have traveled, within the limits of this country, a distance of a little more than 401,000 miles, a distance approximately equal to sixteen times around the circle of the globe, an average of 40,000 miles a year, or considerably more than 100 miles a day for the entire period. In many of those years I have made an average of more than one address a day." And this was in the days before the airplane! It should be recalled that the Y.M.C.A. years are included in this summary.

[1]Fellowship Hymns (New York: Y.M.C.A. Press, 1910); The Service Song Book (New York: Association Press, n.d.).

[2]The Bible in the World of Today (New York: Association Press, 1911); Making Religion Efficient (New York: Association Press, 1912).

[3]Cf. F. W. Padelford, "Dr. Clarence A. Barbour and the Baptist Denomination," CRDS Bulletin, IX (May, 1937), 239-42.

Barbour was a speaker of rare eloquence and power. In Rochester it was always a major event when he preached a community sermon; the spacious Eastman Theatre would be packed. He was stocky, John-Bullish of build, piercing of eyes, and possessed of a great voice over which he had full control. He was winsome and humorous, yet charming and persuasive. His sermons abound with literary spice and are well-salted with appropriate poetry. He relied more on moral and emotional suasion than rational argument. And he was, in the manner of his time, almost wholly a topical preacher.[1] These same gifts he exercised on the platform as well as in the pulpit. It was reported in 1928 by a leading academician: "Few speakers among the universities and colleges are as widely known or as well remembered as Dr. Barbour."[2]

Barbour was also a capable administrator, so much so that during the First World War his services were literally demanded by John R. Mott for the National War Work Council of the Y.M.C.A. For this task Barbour was released for the academic year 1917-18, during which time he commuted weekly to New York City. Dean Stewart took up his duties at the seminary. Meanwhile, of course, Barbour had already shown himself well suited to his administrative post. After the war he continued to do so, the major achievement of his administration being the merger of Colgate and Rochester in 1928. He presided over the resultant Colgate Rochester Divinity School one year before accepting the call to become president of his other alma mater, Brown University, thus precisely following the pattern of E. G.

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[1]For a British view on Barbour as preacher, cf. J. H. Rushbrooke's assessment, RTS Bulletin (June, 1924), 3-4.

[2]Provost William A. Wilbur of George Washington University, in the Boston Globe, October 14, 1928; quoted in CRDS Bulletin, I (May, 1929), 249.

Robinson who had gone from Rochester to Brown in 1872. Barbour was therefore, aside from Woelfkin, the only one of the men whom we have studied from the beginning of Strong's administration who did not, either by death or retirement, finish his public career at Rochester. When Barbour died in 1937, literary critic William Lyon Phelps of Yale referred to him as "one of the foremost public speakers and university executives of America."[1]

II

We turn now to some of the internal developments at the seminary during Barbour's administration. We are not here concerned with new appointments to the faculty during this period[2] but with the ways in which the liberalism already achieved at Rochester worked itself out. Some things changed, while others seemingly did not. In this latter category, for instance, students continued, as they had since early in Strong's administration, to band together for weekend trips to nearby churches to hold evangelistic meetings. The usual pattern for the efforts of the "Evangelistic Band" or "Gospel Team" included a series of public services, visits in the homes, and Sunday School talks. A direct evangelistic appeal was made and a record kept of the decisions, which averaged seven or eight

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[1] CRDS Bulletin, IX (May, 1937), 239.

[2] The following were appointed during Barbour's administration: Justin Wroe Nixon (1886-1958), Hoyt Professor of Hebrew language and literature, 1916-18, and Huntley professor of English Bible and Christian sociology, 1918-24; John Richard Brown (1870-1926), Hoyt professor, 1919-22; Earle Bennett Cross (1883-1946), Hoyt professor, 1923-28; John Frederick Vichert (1874-1948), Pratt professor of practical theology, 1923-28; Frank Otis Erb (1878-1950), professor of religious education, 1923-28; Leland Foster Wood (1885-), Huntley professor, 1925-28. Vichert, Cross, Erb, and Wood continued beyond 1928 on the CRDS faculty.

per weekend and ran from none to about fifteen.[1] So in this very tangible way, the evangelical-revivalist heritage persisted at Rochester, a fact to which Barbour occasionally found it convenient to refer in his official report to the trustees.[2] The pattern of public worship at the school changed a bit more, though not drastically. Dean Stewart reported in 1925 that the former plan of a noon prayer meeting and afternnon chapel service each weekday had given way to three morning prayer meetings and one formal service weekly.[3] More immediately noticeable was the effect of the 1920 decision to admit women on the same basis as men. The editor of the Kentucky Baptist paper, The Western Recorder, pronounced this action "liberal" and accused the seminary of deliberately denying the Apostle Paul's injunction: "I suffer not a woman to teach" (I Timothy 2:12).[4]

By the time Barbour assumed the presidency in 1915 the effects of the transition at the school were already manifest in the attitudes and outlook of the students. In what was surely a master stroke for a beginning executive trying to get a feel for his job, Barbour checked the pulse of student attitude for himself in the spring of 1915 by personally interviewing every member of the senior and middler classes. Each student was asked about his own understanding of the Christian faith as well as his impressions of the seminary, and, fortunately for us, Barbour saved his notes from these interviews. The recorded comments are so interesting for what they show of the effect upon students of the theological transition that I am reproducing excerpts in Appendix II. For now we note that the

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[1]Cf. the notes of Harlan M. Frost (class of 1918) in the CRDS archives.

[2]E.g., RTS Bulletin (June, 1926), 176.

[3]RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 46.

[4]The Western Recorder (July 22, 1920), 9.

responses of the students varied from "has been pretty badly shaken up here" and "feels a lack of passion" to "the newer point of view has been his salvation" and "he is obsessed with the personality of Christ"; from "wants to go back to Chicago to the Moody school to get his bearings" and "disappointed in that Rochester was recommended to him as 'orthodox' and is not" to "considered Moody school, but is very glad he came here" and "has more conviction than he used to have on fundamental things, such as Christ as Master and Savior and his duty to preach." Barbour evidently learned a great deal from these interviews and in the main he must have been pleased. By his own tally, only two of the seniors held "traditional" beliefs (one strong, one implied), while fourteen held "reconstructive" views (thirteen definite, one implied), and four were non-commital.[1]

The framework for the education of these students was the curriculum. We have reviewed already the basic changes in the course of study across the years, the most notable being those during Stewart's brief term in office. But the curriculum continued to evolve at Rochester. In 1917, for the first time a student could enroll for a non-language degree, substituting for Greek and Hebrew either a modern language or instruction in "scientific, philosophical, or historical method."[2] In 1913 the complete offerings had been divided into four "groups"--the biblical, historical, systematic, and practical. A fifth, the "ethical and sociological," was added in 1919, though in 1922 there was a relapse to the old pattern of listing courses according to the isolated disciplines. But the group idea was revived in 1926, this time with more imagimative as well as suggestive

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[1]Barbour's notes are in the CRDS archives.

[2]Faculty Minutes, May 4, 1917.

headings--"Christian origins" (biblical), "Christian progress" (historical), "Christian interpretation" (systematic), and "Christian leadership" (practical). Otherwise there was not much change in the basic course of studies at Rochester between 1915 and 1928, but throughout the period this seminary was regarded as in the vanguard of curricular experimentation and reconstruction. Robert L. Kelly, in his massive study of Theological Education in America, published in 1924, concluded that Rochester had "made a marvelous development during the last half century in its struggle to meet the needs of changing conditions." More specifically, he pointed out that this school had made "a great break from the dogmatic to the scientific, from the theoretical to the practical, and from the ecclesio-centric to the socio-centric point of view."[1] To round out the picture one might add: "from the exegetical to the historical."

During the second decade of the twentieth century the Rochester Bulletin was transformed from an occasional reportorial paper to a significant organ of liberal Christian opinion, carrying largely articles and reviews by Moehlman, Cross, Robins, and Parsons. At least it was an outlet for the ideas of these men. And if it be argued that they were not the leading lights of American religious liberalism, it can be countered that they were representative, that they were significant in shaping the thought of one of the mainline denominations in America, and that much of their work had a sterling quality about it. To Moehlman should go the chief credit for making the Bulletin into a scholarly production, for he was editor from 1913 to 1919, after which the editorship was passed around on a rotating basis until Parsons took up the task in 1926.

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[1]Kelly, Theological Education in America (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1924), p. 81.

Moehlman, who had brought the Bulletin along to its better days, had resigned from the editorship in a huff. He wrote to Barbour on March 25, 1919:

> I have debated the matter with myself again and again. . . . The only consideration that persuaded me to continue as editor . . . was that during these critical years of transition I might be of some service in keeping the alumni in sympathy with the new order of things. Numerous letters received here convinced me that I was succeeding. But now that the evidence is in that you yourself regard this period of transition as happily over and the seminary as openly launched in and committed to the new order, not the slightest hesitation longer exists on my part. . . . May I personally congratulate you on thus boldly championing the cause of progress. . . . In thus definitely and finally presenting my resignation as editor . . . , I pray that it may take effect immediately.[1]

From this letter we learn something of how Moehlman regarded both the Bulletin and President Barbour--and how caustic he could be with the latter. Barbour responded the very next day:

> I confess I do not quite understand what you say about the fact that I regard the period of transition as happily over, for I certainly have not meant to give the impression that the seminary is not still under criticism. Some of the criticism is and will continue to be for some time to come, in my judgment, a serious matter. I do not know that I have changed in the least from the position which we both took in a conference with you memorable to me. . . . We both felt then, as I am sure we feel now, that one of the most important things in the seminary life is to keep in close touch with the churches, and if we are too far in advance of the general level of church thought and life, we shall be lost so far as being a factor in church thought and life.[2]

The exact circumstances that precipitated this exchange are not clear. We will have occasion below to see that the criticism of the school to which Barbour referred did continue and that the relation to the churches became a major issue. As for Barbour and Moehlman, the disagreement noted above was rather characteristic of their relationship across the years, and

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[1]Letter of Moehlman to Barbour, March 25, 1919.

[2]Letter of Barbour to Moehlman, March 26, 1919.

Barbour regarded Moehlman as a thorn in the flesh. Yet on the occasion of his absence in the fall of 1925, Barbour was willing to entrust his principal public duties to Moehlman, making him in effect acting president. As for Barbour's relationship to the others on the faculty, his correspondence indicates that he was very close and held bonds of mutual affection with Betteridge, Rauschenbusch, Robins, and Cross, the first of whom did not long survive his coming to the presidency. As for Stewart, the two men apparently worked side-by-side well enough, though there was always a spirit of rivalry there.

If Moehlman sometimes seemed disagreeable, he was by no means the most controversial figure within the faculty during our period. That distinction belongs to Walter Rauschenbusch. After the publication in 1907 of his Christianity and the Social Crisis fame had come to the Rochester prophet and from then until his death in 1918 he was much in demand as a lecturer. The seminary trustees knew his value to the school; one year their official report called him "in a true sense . . . a maker of church history by his epoch-making addresses."[1] His classroom schedule was regularly arranged to provide him with long weekends for his speaking engagements, and he was otherwise generally treated as a "privileged character,"[2] a fact sometimes resented by others on the faculty. Also, there was a continuing sort of below-the-surface rivalry between Rauschenbusch and Stewart, stemming from the fact that the latter was originally appointed to teach in the area of Rauschenbusch's special competence--Christian ethics and sociology. Evidently the trustees feared Rauschenbusch might prove too radical in this area, so they left him to church history.

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[1] RTS Bulletin (June, 1915), 20.

[2] The words were used by Betteridge in a letter to Rauschenbusch, October 10, 1912.

The really severe strain on relations between Rauschenbusch and his colleagues, however, resulted from his expressed opinions on the First World War, which were decidedly against the stream of American public opinion and were widely interpreted as pro-German. His German background and name, not to mention his published views, made him a ready victim of the jingoism of the time, as we have seen. Unfortunately, this animosity came also to be expressed at least covertly within the seminary, especially by Moehlman and by those of Canadian and British origins and sympathies--Stewart, Cross, and Parsons. Moehlman, like Rauschenbusch, was of German stock, but so great was his desire not to be linked to his Germanic heritage that he Anglicized his name, dropping the final "n" from what was originally "Moehlmann."[1] Anyway, the loneliness that Rauschenbusch knew so well was made more bitter by his alienation from his colleagues during what his wife, in a letter to Barbour on the very eve of her husband's death, called "these last four years of hate." She continued, referring to the final months during which disease had made its fatal advance:

> This last year was in some ways worst of all. . . . He who always kept to himself all his pain and trouble, cried out several times in his weakness--at the cruelty practiced against him by some of the men.[2]

During all of this President Barbour, who certainly never agreed with Rauschenbusch's views on the war,[3] nevertheless stayed on good terms with him. Early in 1917 Barbour wrote his colleague:

> I am very desirous that nothing in this wretched matter of war shall disturb our long and close friendship. . . . You have

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[1]The earliest indication I have found of the change in spelling is RTS Bulletin (May, 1920), 56.

[2]Letter of Pauline Rauschenbusch to Barbour, July 24, 1918.

[3]For Barbour's own views on the war, cf. RTS Bulletin (May, 1917), 31-34; (June, 1917), 32; and (June, 1918), 39-40.

> been outspoken in the definition of your position. . . . There is manifestly a difference of conviction among the disciples of Christ, a difference which surely can exist without the suspicion of ulterior motive.[1]

This letter, from the president to the professor, with its frank admission of the right to disagree, was written prior to official American entry into the war. There is no reason, however, to suppose that Barbour ever deviated from what he then said. He tried once, shortly after the American declaration of war, to persuade Rauschenbusch to give a public address of a patriotic nature, but he left wide open the door to refusal,[2] and when his friend went through that door he did not pursue him further. Otherwise, Barbour persistently stood between Rauschenbusch and his critics. For example, in mid-summer of 1917 a prominent Baptist minister, Orlo J. Price, wrote Barbour asking about Rauschenbusch's views and questioning whether he should remain on the seminary faculty.[3] In responding, Barbour indicated his own regret that Rauschenbusch could not

> see his way clear to make a positive public statement which would be satisfactory to his many friends. . . . You will understand, however, that it is impossible for me to have any constraining influence with him. He is accustomed to think for himself, and to do as he deems right.[4]

Thus, in every way possible, Barbour tried to shield and befriend his oppressed colleague. And he knew, perhaps as well as anyone, that Rauschenbusch was "very sad over the matter; indeed, it has aged him many years."[5]

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[1]Letter of Barbour to Rauschenbusch, February 28, 1917.

[2]Letter of Barbour to Rauschenbusch, April 26, 1917.

[3]Letter of Price to Barbour, July 11, 1917. Price was no fundamentalist. Educated at Chicago (B.D., 1898) and at Leipzig (Ph.D., 1901), he was at the time of this letter pastor of the First Baptist Church of Lansing, Michigan, and a member of the Executive Committee of the Northern Baptist Convention. From 1919 to 1932 he was Executive Secretary of the Rochester Federation of Churches.

[4]Letter of Barbour to Price, August 3, 1917. [5]Ibid.

Aged him indeed! Before many months had passed he was incapacitated, and on July 25, 1918, death claimed him. Barbour's words, penned the following spring, were not idle:

> The passing of Walter Rauschenbusch was the occasion of a great outpouring of testimony from those in high places and from the lowly, as to the unparalleled service the magnitude of which, in his modesty, he had never realized, and which, indeed, even those of us who knew him best and loved him most had not known. His life and character are a perennial heritage to the seminary.[1]

III

Barbour standing in the breach was doing again what A. H. Strong had done before him. Rauschenbusch had come under severe fire even within the Board of Trustees on the occasion of the publication of Christianity and the Social Crisis in 1907. So far from succumbing to pressure to dismiss Rauschenbusch, Strong praised him and told the trustees that the controverted volume "is a production of such vitality and genius that it promises to stand side by side with the Progress and Poverty of Henry George, though it has in it far more of the Christian spirit."[2] Strong had originally promised freedom for expression to Rauschenbusch and he never reneged on that promise. Moreover, across the years he gave encouragement to the younger man in his work. By the time Christianizing the Social Order appeared in 1912 Strong had retired, but he wrote to say:

> It is a great book, and I am proud of you. . . . Your writing is distinctly Christian. . . . I do not see how it can fail to stir the consciences and warm the hearts of our well-to-do church members.[3]

Rauschenbusch's final work, A Theology for the Social Gospel, which came

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[1] RTS Bulletin (June, 1919), 36.

[2] Annual Report of the Union, 1907, p. 33.

[3] Letter of Strong to Rauschenbusch, December 30, 1912.

from the press in 1917, was dedicated "with reverence and gratitude to Augustus Hopkins Strong." Strong wrote from Pasadena, California, to say that he was "quite satisfied with the form of the dedication" and felt "honored by it," but that he had "a book of my own in press which will show you better my attitude toward the theological problems of the day."[1] He referred to A Tour of the Missions (1918), at which we will shortly look. Now, however, we note the apparent change in attitude of Strong toward Rauschenbusch. The latter wrote Barbour that Strong's letter

> sounded so exactly like the way he used to talk down at us in his classroom, with kindly praise for our juvenile talent, and ex cathedra directions as to what we ought to think. No indications of any sense of sin for the terrible lack of vision in the old theology. Well, God knows I was prompted by pure affection and loyalty to offer my dedication, but perhaps it was a boyish impulse.[2]

Apparently Strong was in no mood for Rauschenbusch's show of affection and loyalty, though his rebuff was anything but final and he probably later regretted it. So soon he was sitting down to write the social prophet's widow:

> I cannot tell you how great is my sorrow over the death of your husband and my dear friend. No more chivalrous and loving spirit was ever born, except our Lord and Redeemer. . . . He is at rest and his works will follow him, for he espoused the cause of the weak, and sought justice from the strong.[3]

With this telling tribute a long and eventful relationship came to an end. One only hopes that in Strong's final visit with Rauschenbusch in the hospital he did not fail to communicate directly something like the above commendation.

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[1]Letter of Strong to Rauschenbusch, December 25, 1917.

[2]Letter of Rauschenbusch to Barbour, January 23, 1918.

[3]Letter of Strong to Mrs. Rauschenbusch, July 25, 1918.

What we are concerned with now is Strong's own state of mind during his retirement days. It will be remembered that when at the age of seventy-five he ended his brilliant public career, frustration was upon him. His older son Charles had deserted the faith and been excommunicated from his father's church, and his younger son John had been rejected as unfit to carry on in his father's stead at the seminary--which really meant the end at Rochester of what had for so long been the Rochester theology. And to all this was added the extra burden of his wife's failure in health. As if the usual traumas of old age were not enough, Strong was bedeviled in his later years by a whole collection of traumas any one of which might undo a lesser man. With regard to the seminary, it was almost as if he who had brought the school so far was now to be shut out only because he had lived so long. But it must not be forgotten that, even if he later came to regret any part of the change, Strong had really initiated the transition that was carried through after his retirement.

When he stepped down from the presidency, Strong was retained as a member of the Board of Trustees. In 1913 he presented his resignation, but it was respectfully declined. Thereafter, until his death he was duly elected every three years and his name continued on the roster of the Board's Executive Committee. But according to the official records, not once during this whole period did he attend a meeting of either the full Board or the Executive Committee. Thus, by his own wise choice, he withdrew from any continuing participation in the official deliberations regarding the school's life. Undoubtedly, he was not happy with certain of the trustee decisions of those days--like the election to the faculty of Cross, Robins, and Parsons, not to mention Barbour's elevation to the presidency. But, whatever he thought, he did not try to exercise a continuing influence

in the councils of power and policy.[1] He did continue to take part in the worship of the seminary community, regularly for the first couple of years,[2] more sporadically thereafter. Also, from time to time, he was invited to address the students.

We have already seen that Strong had rather pronounced misgivings from the first about Barbour; he never found it easy to hide his disappointment and often referred to his successor condescendingly as "that Y.M.C.A. man." Strong's relation with Stewart was of longer and more durable standing, though it too was clouded in these latter days, and not altogether by the changes in theological climate. At just about the same time in 1914 both men lost their wives--two of the truly gracious grande dames of Rochester in their generation. Strong was then in his seventy-eighth year and Stewart was sixty-two. Neither man was ready to resign from life, and it was not long before both had remarried. Strong was the first to do so. Early in 1915 he took as his wife Marguerite Geraldine Jones, widow of the late John Jay Jones, greatest benefactor in the seminary's history. The widow Jones was quite a prize, and it is remembered that, in winning her hand, Strong's nearest competitor was none other than J. W. A. Stewart.

If Strong still had enough vigor to take a wife in his old age he also had zest for other things. In the nine-and-a-half years left to him after his retirement he made a world tour of mission stations, published eight volumes,[3] wrote a few articles, toured Europe's war-devastated areas,

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[1]For Barbour's own statement to this effect, cf. The Baptist (December 31, 1921), 1516.

[2]Dean Stewart invited Strong to continue leading the noon prayer meeting every Tuesday for the academic years 1912-13 and 1913-14. Cf. RTS Bulletin (May, 1914), 34.

[3]Miscellanies, 2 vols. (1912); One-Hundred Chapel Talks (1913); Union with Christ (1913); Popular Lectures on the Books of the New

spent each winter in southern California, and gave numerous sermons and addresses in a variety of places. His was not a retiring retirement. In addition to the above he also moved to redeem an earlier wrong, namely his complicity in the 1891 excommunication from Rochester's First Baptist Church of his son Charles. In a letter dated July 9, 1916, he asked the church to reverse its action:

> Times have changed during these last twenty years. Churches think less of mere formulas of doctrine, and more of the spirit of man's life. I believe that my son shows in his life the work of Christ's Spirit; and that a reversal of the church's action, and his restoration to church-fellowship, may themselves be a help to the settlement in his mind of some of the speculative problems that have vexed him.
>
> I wish to confess my own wrong in the matter. . . . I would now be more lenient and forebearing and hopeful in cases where there is no moral delinquency, and where the defect is only intellectual misunderstanding. I am nearing my fourscore years, and I would like to celebrate my eightieth birthday with this burden off my mind.[1]

The church voted unanimously to rescind its previous action. The interesting thing is that as late as 1916 Strong was speaking thus about church discipline with respect to theological error, urging the church to regard the spirit of one's life above "mere formulas of doctrine."

Previously we observed that there were three main phases in Strong's thought, each characterized by a shift in attitude and outlook. First was the restrictive phase of his inherited rationalist orthodoxy, then the expansiveness and inclusiveness of his middle and creative period, and finally a defensive and polemical stage. This last phase developed mainly during the retirement years, though we noted signs of its coming as early as 1907, particularly in his warning in the preface to the final edition

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Testament (1914); American Poets and Their Theology (1916); A Tour of the Missions (1918); and What Shall I Believe? (1922).

[1]"Church Records," First Baptist Church, Rochester, New York, July 26, 1916.

of the Systematic Theology that "we seem upon the verge of a second Unitarian defection."[1] Regarded simply as negative, the third phase began, then, about midway through the last of Strong's four decades at Rochester, at just about the time his long-time companions, the Big Five, were one by one being taken from his side. But regarded as a rigid holding of the doctrinal lines and as principally reactionary and polemical, the beginning of the third phase must be found later, later in fact than the just-quoted letter on church discipline and right doctrine. By the time of his retirement in 1912 Strong was already disappointed in the drift of things at the seminary, and his disappointment may subsequently have passed into disillusionment. Yet he continued to hold his peace. Evidently what finally sparked his polemic was his first-hand observation of mission work during a six month tour of mission stations in 1916-1917.

Upon his return from that journey in the spring of 1917 he published an article in the Watchman Examiner, national Baptist paper published at New York City. He indicated his generally favorable impression of the denomination's mission effort, but went on to report that there were "here and there" missionaries who

> had gotten their preparation for evangelistic work from American teachers of comparative religion, who put Buddha on the same plane with Christ. The result has only shown the impotence of a man-made gospel to combat heathenism. . . . All this is a lesson to our missionary societies and churches at home. The colleges and seminaries that permit indefinite and unevangelical doctrine to be taught, and that retain those who teach it on the ground that liberality in theology is a duty, merit the censure of God and man, for the school or the church that ceases to be evangelical will soon cease to be evangelistic, and when it ceases to be evangelistic it will soon cease to exist. In this way missions are the testing-places of Christian doctrine.[2]

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[1] Systematic Theology, p. ix.

[2] Watchman Examiner (March 29, 1917), 395.

Thus did Strong fire his own blast and thus did he lay out the field of battle for others who were eager for the fray. What he expressed in the article he soon said again and at greater length as well as with more force in the volume entitled A Tour of the Missions (1918)--the book to which he had referred in his curt letter to Rauschenbusch.

A Tour of the Missions consists of a vivid, sometimes charming on-the-spot account of Strong's journey, plus reflections also written at intervals along the way. The overall impression of the volume is one of a too uncritical approval of paternalism and even colonialism in Christian missions, despite considerable sensitivity to the non-Christian religions. But what now concerns us is the polemical aspect of the book. Strong was convinced that the root of the problem in missions was a wrong approach to the Bible, so he leveled his attack against "the historical method as frequently employed." That is, he was not opposed to the method as such, but

> only when it assumes to be the exclusive means of attaining truth, follows the methods of physical science, and ignores the far more important material for religious use which is furnished by intuition and revelation.[1]

In other words, as Strong saw it, a Christian approach to the Bible must proceed on the basis of an intuitive awareness of God's existence (Strong's "rational intuition") and an acceptance of the revelation of God in Christ. It was this last that was really crucial, for, as he put it, "the historical method . . ., as it is often employed, ends without Christ, because it begins without him."[2] So far Strong was only pointing out an inadequacy of much of the biblical criticism of his day, and in so doing was demonstrating an insight uncommon at the time, an insight by which he precisely

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[1] A Tour of the Missions, pp. 165-66. [2] Ibid., p. 181.

anticipated subsequent development in the Christian understanding of revelation.[1] Here he was corrective and therefore potentially helpful. But he annulled any positive effect he might have had by turning to the attack.

"What," he said, "is the effect of this method upon our theological seminaries?" His answer:

> It is to deprive the gospel message of all definiteness, and to make professors and students disseminators of doubts. Many a professor has found teaching preferable to preaching, because he lacked the initial Christian experience which gives to preaching its certainty and power. He chooses the line of least resistance, and becomes in the theological seminary a blind leader of the blind. Having no system of truth to teach, he becomes a mere lecturer on the history of doctrine. Having no key in Christ to the unity of Scripture, he becomes a critic of what he is pleased to call its fragments, that is, the dissector of a cadaver. Ask him if he believes in the preexistence, deity, virgin birth, miracles, atoning death, physical resurrection, omnipresence, and omnipotence of Christ, and he denies your right to require of him any statement of his own beliefs. He does not conceive it to be his duty to furnish his students with any fixed conclusions as to doctrine. . . . The apostle Paul was not so reticent. . . . It is no wonder that our modern critics cry, 'Back to Christ,' for this means, 'Away from Paul.' The result of such teaching in our seminaries is that the student, unless he has had a Pauline experience before he came, has all his early conceptions of Scripture and of Christian doctrine weakened, has no longer any positive message to deliver, loses the ardor of his love for Christ, and at his graduation leaves the seminary, not to become preacher or pastor as he had once hoped, but to sow his doubts broadcast, as teacher in some college, as editor of some religious journal, as secretary of some Young Men's Christian Association, or as agent of some mutual life insurance company. . . . The theological seminaries of almost all our denominations are becoming so infected with this grievous error, that they are not so much organs of Christ, as they are organs of Antichrist. This accounts for the rise, all over the land, of Bible schools, to take the place of the seminaries. The evil is coming in like a flood, and the Spirit of the Lord will surely raise up a standard against it. But oh the pity! that money given by godly men to provide preachers of the gospel should be devoted to undermining the Christian cause![2]

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[1]For Strong's full discussion, cf. ibid., chaps. 15 and 16.

[2]Ibid., pp. 189-91.

Some might have thought Strong was describing the Rochester Seminary itself, and certainly, whether he intended it or not, the Y.M.C.A. reference was taken as a dig at President Barbour.[1] But did he really suppose that his own school had become an "organ of Antichrist"? Whatever he had in mind, he now dignified that sort of poisonous language by his own example, as well as placed his blessing upon the new Bible schools and his curse upon those seminaries that persisted in "undermining the Christian cause." But he had yet more to say. "The effect of this method of interpretation upon the churches of our denomination," he said,

> is to cut the tap-root of their strength, and to imperil their very existence. . . . The weakness of our denomination in such cities as New York results from the acceptance of the method of Scripture interpretation I have been criticizing. . . . The unbelief in our seminary teaching is like a blinding mist which is slowly settling down upon our churches.

The result of this, thought Strong, was an easy surrender of doctrinal distinctiveness, which was no mere "lapse in denominationalism" but "a far more radical evil. It is apostasy from Christ and revolt against his government."[2]

Back on the missionary theme, Strong said:

> Our lack at home of the right interpretation of Scripture, and our fading knowledge in experience of the presence and power of Christ, have gone from us round the world. Some boards are sending out as missionaries young men who lack definite views of doctrine. . . . No man has a right to go, and no board has a right to send, as a missionary, one who has not had such a personal experience of Christ as will enable him to stand against this unscientific and unchristian method of Scripture interpretation.[3]

So, Strong could be not only polemical, but dogmatically so. He closed this part of his discussion with the question: "Whence has come this

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[1]Interview with Glenn B. Ewell, February 26, 1964.

[2]A Tour of the Missions, pp. 191-93. [3]Ibid., pp. 193-94.

so-called 'historical method' of interpreting Scripture? I answer: It was 'made in Germany!'"[1] Thus, with the introduction of the anti-German motif and a brief nod to evolution being "itself personified and made the only power of the universe,"[2] Strong rounded out his symphony of negative and polemical themes, all of which together or each separately now waited to be taken up and developed if not refined by the fundamentalists who were already standing in the galleries. As for Strong and his reactionary, sometimes venomous pronouncements, the previously quoted words of Rauschenbusch are apropos: "No indications of any sense of sin for the terrible lack of vision in the old theology."[3]

It is a shame that A Tour of the Missions was ever written. One can only conclude that the old man lived too long. And the animus with which whole sections of this volume were written must have done nothing to make his final days happy. He had lived a rich life and had in his own way stayed abreast of the thought currents of his day. But in the end it was biblical criticism that most haunted him, perhaps because he always thought himself to have erected a system upon scripture. As we have seen, he had never accepted the higher criticism in any but a perfunctory way. He did not really test thoroughly his own best insights. And toward the end, when he already had eight decades behind him, he became convinced of the destructive nature of the historical method as usually practiced, and he lashed out. This was the third phase of his long career as a practicing theologian, the phase when he was either too tired or too frustrated to keep his own Christian sensibilities about him. To the liberals--the Rochester

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[1] Ibid., p. 195. [2] Ibid., p. 196.

[3] Letter of Rauschenbusch to Barbour, January 23, 1918.

liberals--he was an anomaly, and it was difficult to be sympathetic with him. If he had once been the seminary, he was no more, nor did it appear he should ever be again.

In the three years between A Tour of the Missions and his death Strong wrote a number of articles, mostly conciliatory and re-emphasizing his more progressive insights, almost as if he wanted to recoup what had been lost by his polemics.[1] He produced a brilliant summary in a positive vein of "My Views of the Universe in General"--written in 1920 but sounding more like the Strong of 1900. Again it was his vision of the cosmic Christ, by means of which he could accept evolution and higher criticism, look hopefully upon Confucius and Buddha, rejoice in Christian union, and deplore the Senate's failure to ratify the Treaty of Versailles--all from the same perspective of faith. "My views," he said,

> are midway between two opposite extremes. Both sides fire into me, while I am only the more convinced that my middle ground is the only correct position. I claim that the truth has in it the elements of both parties in the controversy.[2]

The controversy to which he referred was the fundamentalist struggle which already was dividing his own denomination. One could wish that this fine statement might have been Strong's final word on the matter, but it was not. In the summer of 1921 he entered the fray again, this time more directly than before, as we will see below.

Late in the fall of the same year he traveled to Chicago where he gave several lectures--at the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, but also at the University of Chicago! From there he journeyed on to Pasadena,

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[1]Cf. especially What Shall I Believe? (1922). This little primer of doctrine, published posthumously, first appeared as a series of articles in Watchman Examiner during 1921.

[2]The Baptist (May 29, 1920), 625.

California, where he was taken suddenly ill shortly after his arrival, dying November 29, 1921, at the age of eighty-five. The Executive Committee of the seminary's Board of Trustees adopted a minute of appreciation which recalled how under Strong's leadership

> the seminary went from strength to strength. . . . It is a great record which has closed. The seminary can never forget, and must never forget, the life which was lived and the work which was wrought during those two-score years.[1]

Unfortunately, there were also other things that would not soon be forgotten. But the name remains. Today students at the Colgate Rochester Divinity School gaze upon a life-size bronze bust of Strong and study in a hall that bears his name.

IV

In the preceding pages several allusions have been made to the fundamentalist controversy. The involvement of the Rochester Seminary in that struggle is part of our story, but in order best to understand that we need first to review the relation of the seminary to the churches. Already we have seen that from its origin the seminary was legally independent of the churches, since its sponsoring society was not an ecclesiastical body but really a private, self-perpetuating corporation existing for the sole purpose of supporting the school. And we noted that from the first the seminary was committed to travel two roads for its own economic well-being--the road to the churches and the road to the permanent endowment necessary for financial security. The school did indeed travel these two roads, the first more out of devotion and faith than necessity, the second from necessity alone. And, as we saw, the way of necessity led finally to the bread and butter years at the close of Strong's career, when permanent

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[1]Minutes of the Executive Committee, December 2, 1921.

investments began to provide better than nine of every ten dollars of the school's annual income. A broad and deep foundation of economic stability was thus laid during Strong's administration, so that his successors, Stewart and Barbour, were never plagued with the sort of economic worries that had earlier beset the school. During their respective terms the financial base was strengthened yet more, with the productive assets increasing steadily from $1,733,000 in 1912 to better than $2,177,000 in 1928. And the ratio of investment income to total annual receipts continued through this whole period at a fantastic level, all the while gradually rising--from 92.9 per cent in 1912 to 94.9 per cent in 1920 to 98.6 per cent in 1928. Thus, at just the time when theological liberalism came to dominate and to flourish at Rochester, nearly every cent of every dollar required at the school was being provided by the income from permanent investments.[1]

That was the road to financial security. The road to the churches was different, for it was less and less at Rochester a way of necessity, precisely because of what was acquired along that other road. A way of devotion and faith, of devotion to the church and faith in its gospel--that was the road to the churches. And it was a devotion and a faith which required initiative on the part of those in the school, initiative lest the tie between school and church should be broken. And at Rochester initiative was not lacking. We have noted the role of the Bulletin at just this point. We have seen the concern of Moehlman, its long-time editor, that this journal keep the alumni not only loyal but abreast of what was

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[1]The financial details given here and in the following pages are drawn from a study of the regular reports of the treasurer as printed in the RTS Bulletin in June of each year.

happening at the seminary. The importance of the Bulletin in fostering theological transition not only in the school but also in the minds of its supporters and followers can hardly be overestimated. Initiative was also exercised at Rochester to keep the seminary personnel--and therefore the seminary--before the churches. For instance, in the summer and autumn of 1919 the members of the faculty attended and addressed twenty of the annual meetings of the Baptist associations in New York State.[1] Faculty members also regularly attended and participated in other affairs of the denomination, particularly at the national level. In this respect the seminary under Stewart and Barbour went quite beyond the practice of Strong's administration, when for the most part the seminary president himself was sole spokesman for the institution in denominational gatherings. So the liberals were not lacking in the initiative necessary to keep in touch with the churches. They did, however, let die the Examining Committee which had previously provided a semi-official tie to the churches. Also, they now found it no longer obligatory to travel the road to the churches in quest of funds, so direct solicitation fell off.

Regarding the matter of funds from the churches, the decade from 1910 to 1920 saw a steady decline in such receipts at the seminary--from $5,900 in 1910 to $4,000 in 1920, with a dip to $3,200 for each of the war years, 1917 and 1918. These funds all came directly from the particular churches involved. After 1920, however, and through 1928, most church contributions came indirectly to the seminary, being channeled through the denomination as a part of what was called the New World Movement. The New World Movement, the Northern Baptist version of the ill-fated Interchurch

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[1] RTS Bulletin (June, 1920), 19; cf. ibid. (June, 1921), 45.

World Movement,[1] was a daring venture in corporate economic stewardship by means of which this relatively small denomination boldly set out to raise the fantastic sum of $100,000,000 in a five year period beginning April 1, 1919.[2] It was an example of the optimism of the time. The Rochester Seminary's cut of the pie was to be half-a-million dollars, which would have been a phenomenal increase in receipts from the churches. But, so far as the seminary was concerned, the whole campaign was a financial faux pas. When all was said and done, total receipts from the movement amounted to almost half of the original $100 million goal--in itself no mean achievement. But because some denominational agencies had courted economic disaster by projecting current expenditures on the basis of anticipated income, the funds actually received could not be proportionately distributed, and it was the educational institutions that lost out. As one student of the movement put it,

> the denomination abdictated responsibility for the schools in favor of missionaries, whose salaries had to be met. Colleges and seminaries could more easily find alternative means of support, and they were left to fend for themselves.[3]

It is not precisely correct that the Rochester Seminary was left only to other resources, for between 1921 and 1928 no year passed in which the school failed to have some share in contributions to the New World Movement. The most received from this source for any one year was $4,000 in 1921, the least $1,000 in 1923, while the average was $2,475 per year and the total for the eight year period was $19,800--a drop of forty per cent

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[1] On the Interchurch World Movement, cf. Donald B. Meyer, The Protestant Search for Political Realism, 1919-1941 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), pp. 9f, 58ff.

[2] Cf. Eldon G. Ernst, "American Baptists and the New World Movement, 1918-1924," Foundations, VIII (April, 1965), 161-71.

[3] Ibid., p. 169.

below receipts from churches during the previous eight years. Meanwhile, after 1921 direct contributions from the churches fell off sharply and finally trickled out altogether after 1925. The churches had learned to channel their gifts through the denomination.

As a means of stirring a corporate and ecclesial consciousness within the denomination, the long-rage effect of the New World Movement was undoubtedly salutary, but its immediate effect on the Rochester Seminary was not only to penalize the school financially but also effectively to cut if off from one of its few avenues of direct commerce with the churches--at just the time when the schools were coming under attack from the fundamentalists. Indeed, the fortune of the New World Movement and the fundamentalist protest are very much intertwined. Interpreters of this history characteristically lay a good bit of the blame for the movement's collapse upon the fundamentalists.[1] And the matter looked about the same to some leading Baptists at the time. At the 1922 convention at Indianapolis, for instance, Bible translator Helen Barrett Montgomery, prominent resident of Rochester and then president of the Northern Baptist Convention, thought it important to speak

> a frank word . . . in behalf of the New World Movement, for there has been much unintelligent and misinformed criticism of it. . . . The mass of criticism has retarded the movement. The persistent stinging and nagging of petty accusations, the irresponsible statements, the wild charges have been believed by many people, confidence has been weakened, and a great amount of money diverted to other channels, with the result that our national societies are gravely embarrassed and their work halted.[2]

Thus, as Mrs. Montgomery saw it, the crisis facing the New World Movement was precipitated by the dissent of the fundamentalists.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 166-67; and Sandford Fleming, "American Baptists and Higher Education," (unpublished typescript; Rochester: American Baptist Historical Society, 1963), IV, pp. 810-12.

[2] Northern Baptist Convention Annual, 1922, p. 41.

V

In the post-World War I years fundamentalism affected several of the mainline American denominations, but none more than the Northern Baptist Convention.[1] It was a Northern Baptist, Curtis Lee Laws, editor of the Watchman Examiner, who gave the movement its name. "We suggest," he wrote in 1920,

> that those who still cling to the great fundamentals and who mean to do battle royal for the fundamentals shall be called 'Fundamentalists.' By that name the editor . . . is willing to be called. It will be understood therefore when he uses the word it will be in compliment and not in disparagement.[2]

The exact content of "the great fundamentals" cannot be precisely defined since it varied from person to person. Ernest R. Sandeen, in an important revisionist study, suggests that at bottom fundamentalism was an alliance between the sort of dispensational premillennialism made popular by the Scofield Reference Bible (1909) and a doctrine of inspiration that entailed the notion of an inerrant Bible, the one being the child of mid-nineteenth Darbyite dispensationalism[3] and the other the product of the late-nineteenth century Princeton theology of A. A. Hodge (1823-1886) and B. B. Warfield (1881-1921).[4] If Sandeen is correct, it would seem that, whatever other

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[1]The standard treatments are S. G. Cole, The History of Fundamentalism (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1931), and N. F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954).

[2]Watchman Examiner (July 1, 1920), 834.

[3]John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), prominent among the founders of the Plymouth Brethren, first published his dispensational views in the 1830's.

[4]Professor Sandeen's study of fundamentalism is not yet published. His findings were presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Church History in San Francisco, December, 1965. Cf. his "The Princeton Theology: One Source of Biblical Literalism in American Protestantism," Church History, XXXI (September, 1962), 307-21.

views one might hold, the real fundamentals were dispensational premillennialism and biblical inerrancy, both of which, as held, were products of nineteenth century theology. It appears, therefore, that the fundamentalists, despite their protestations of orthodoxy, were themselves theological innovators.

A thorough examination of the writings of leading extreme Baptist fundamentalists, a task really beyond the scope of the present study, would I think, at least in part, substantiate Sandeen's thesis by showing that the common ground on which such persons stood was adherence to dispensational premillennialism and biblical inerrancy.[1] It is evident, however, particularly for the period of struggle through the 1920's that the latter--biblical inerrancy--was really the touchstone for the former, as it was in fact also the supposed guarantor of certain other disputed points, such as fiat creation, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the virgin birth, the deity of Jesus, bodily resurrection, and the like. The central concern of, and therefore the central issue for, the fundamentalists was the inerrant Bible. It should not be supposed, however, that the Princeton theology was solely responsible for the notion of biblical inerrancy, for according to Norman H. Maring, who has made an exhaustive study of the matter, Baptists in America in the 1860's "shared a predominant belief in the inerrancy of the Bible."[2] But the peculiar thing about the Princeton theology was the way inspiration and inerrancy were linked so that any demonstration of error within the Bible tended to

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[1]This statement applies to extremist leaders and by no means to all of those who for a time labored together under the fundamentalist banner. At the height of the controversy the extremists had their day. Cf. Norman H. Maring, "Conservative but Progressive," in What God Hath Wrought, ed. Gilbert L. Guffin (Philadelphia: Judson, 1960), pp. 15-49.

[2]Maring, "Baptists and Changing Views of the Bible, 1865-1918," Foundations, I (July, 1958), 52.

call into question not only the truth of Scripture but the authenticity of the Christian faith itself. Maring shows that only one Baptist scholar of note in the latter nineteenth century acquired "a reputation for consistent, militant defense of the Princeton views of inspiration,"[1] and that was none other than Rochester's own Howard Osgood. So it might be said that with the fundamentalist protest the ghost of Osgood had come back to haunt the Rochester liberals.

In the heat of battle there were some who made common cause with the fundamentalists who themselves rejected either premillennialism or biblical inerrancy or both. A. H. Strong is a case in point. He always maintained that there was an element of truth in premillennialism, but he said the same of postmillennialism and steadfastly refused to identify himself with either view while claiming to embrace the best of both.[2] With regard to the Bible, he never bound inspiration to inerrancy, after the manner of the Princeton theology, though this is precisely what the fundamentalists did. W. B. Riley's comment was typical: "Baptists believe the Bible to be an inspired Book, and hence inerrant!"[3] Strong did not speak of the Bible in this way, but preferred to "inerrant" the more flexible term "infallible." Even this, however, he dropped in the final edition of the Systematic Theology, speaking instead of the Bible as "sufficient" for its intended purpose.[4] And already he had set it down that he was "not

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[1] Ibid., p. 58.

[2] Cf. A Tour of the Missions, pp. 197-98; "My Views of the Universe in General," The Baptist (May 29, 1920), 625-26.

[3] Baptist Fundamentals, ed. Curtis Lee Laws (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1920), p. 169.

[4] Systematic Theology, p. 196.

willing to stake the Christian faith upon the correctness even of the original autographs of Scripture."[1] He never encased his thought in so rigid a framework as that of an inerrant Bible, even in his late, reactionary stage. At that point at least he never turned back upon himself. So Strong was no fundamentalist, and the implicates of his view on the Bible alone were really upsetting to the foundation on which fundamentalism rested. Yet, as we have seen, he gave the movement within his own denomination his explicit blessing. And if the fundamentalist leaders ever saw clearly just how different his basic view was from their own, they never admitted it. On the contrary, they delighted in quoting him in support of their cause, invoking the special benediction of his name. But it was not his theology which they quoted--not that which mattered most to him and to which he had given his life; no, what the fundamentalists always quoted were the vitriolic diatribes from his final, reactionary years.[2] Thus, apart from a few choice paragraphs precisely suited to their purposes, mostly excised from A Tour of the Missions, the fundamentalists seemingly had little need for A. H. Strong.

Fundamentalist strategy within the Northern Baptist Convention came to focus on three main objectives: to root "heresy" out of the schools, to raise a confessional standard for "orthodoxy," and to reconstruct the mission work on an orthodox pattern. Our principal concern here is the campaign to chasten the schools, especially as it bore upon the Rochester

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[1] Christ in Creation, p. 127.

[2] E.g., W. B. Riley in Baptist Fundamentals, pp. 181-82; Ernest Gordon, The Leaven of the Sadducees, or Old and New Apostasies (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1926), p. 195, passim; Western Recorder (October 21, 1926), 11. Cf., however, Watchman Examiner (July 1, 1920), 834.

Seminary.[1] After some preliminary skirmishes in the denominational press, in November, 1918, editor Curtis Lee Laws opened the pages of the Watchman Examiner for "an article from each of the seminaries," in which each should indicate its attitude on the following eight points:

1. The inspiration and authority of the Scriptures.
2. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ.
3. The sacrifice of Christ in relation to the salvation of men.
4. The resurrection of Christ from the dead.
5. The second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the saints.
6. The final estate of those who fail to accept Christ as Savior.
7. Ought unbaptized people to be received into the membership of Baptist churches?
8. What is the mission of the Baptist denomination today?[2]

In subsequent issues of the paper replies came from Newton, Northern, Kansas City, and Berkeley. None was forthcoming from Crozer, Chicago, Colgate, or Rochester, and the Newton response was not satisfactory to critics of the schools. At Rochester in May, 1920, President Barbour told the assembled trustees:

> We have not responded to what we deem an unwarranted demand for a specific and detailed statement of creed. We believe that we would be misrepresenting your desire were we to make such a statement.

And in support of this position he quoted A. H. Strong on "the duty of private judgment" and the impossibility of "absolute uniformity of thinking . . . among differently constituted men."[3] As might be expected, however, the whole matter appeared in a very different light from the fundamentalist perspective:

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[1]For a detailed assembling of the data on this aspect of the fundamentalist controversy, without explicit interpretive comments, cf. S. Fleming, "American Baptists and Higher Education," IV, pp. 832-71.

[2]Watchman Examiner (November 28, 1918). The points were proposed by the Rev. Samuel M. Lindsay of Brooklyn.

[3]RTS Bulletin (June, 1920), 42. Cf. Strong, Philosophy and Religion, p. 327.

> Five out of eight [seminaries] refused to make a confession of faith when couteously asked to do so, and when earnestly pressed to do so, as well for their own sakes as for the sake of the denomination. . . . The case was put up to them squarely and fairly and kindly. And they fell down.[1]

This was the background to the calling of a general conference on "the fundamentals of our Baptist faith"[2] in Buffalo, June 21 and 22, 1920, immediately preceding the regular annual meeting of the Northern Baptist Convention.

In the opening address before the Buffalo Conference, J. C. Massee of Brooklyn set the stage for the fundamentalist attack. "The situation in our schools and seminaries is critical," he said. The problem, as he saw it, was

> the presence in our schools of the radical, scientific attitude of mind toward the Bible, of the materialistic evolutionary theory of life, and the extreme propaganda in behalf of the gospel of social betterment in substitution for the gospel of individual regeneration.

He urged the purging of every "source of pernicious percolating poison," but he knew just how difficult that might be because "practically all our schools are beyond even the indirect control of [the] churches through the convention."[3] W. B. Riley, in an address on "Modernism in Baptist Schools," became more specific and named names, both of schools and of persons. The University of Chicago was his favorite target, but he did not omit others. He was not, however, too hard on Rochester, singling out only George Cross for special mention. What must have brought a sly

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[1] C. H. Fountain, The Denominational Situation: Should Our Schools Be Investigated? (Plainfield, New Jersey: n.p., 1921), p. 23.

[2] Baptist Fundamentals, p. ix. This volume contains the addresses delivered at the Buffalo Conference.

[3] Ibid., pp. 4-6.

grin from anyone who knew was his comment that "Rochester retains a somewhat effective plea for Baptist patronage in the face of an orthodox presidency."[1]

The attention focused on the schools in the pre-convention conference bore fruit on the convention floor in a resolution which as adopted had three main parts. First, the trustees and faculties of all the schools were requested "carefully to examine their work, to correct evils which they may discover, and to put forth a statement of their purpose of work." Second, provision was made for a committee which should

> inquire into the loyalty of our Baptist schools to Jesus Christ and his Gospel, and to the historic faith and practice of the Baptists, and their efficiency in producing men and women of Christian character and capacity for Christian service.

And third, this committee was instructed to report also on "the entire question of the control of these institutions."[2] Barbour, who was present at the convention, wrote to George Cross a few days later that, though "the pre-convention meetings were about as bad as they could be," he thought

> that the brethren overshot the mark and that the outcome was not favorable to their cause. The final form which the resolutions took . . . is not particularly objectionable and I am sure our attitude would be one of cordial cooperation. . . . I have an idea that it will be a good thing, in the long run, for us to have an opportunity really to set forth what we are trying to do. . . . As I see it, and I am sure as you see it, our strength will lie in solid, constructive and devoted work. That will speak for itself.[3]

Cross wrote back to say he was

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[1] Ibid., p. 181.

[2] Annual of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1920, pp. 60-61; cf. pp. 47-49.

[3] Letter of Barbour to Cross, July 5, 1920.

> more and more convinced that a great opportunity for leadership lies before the seminaries. The denomination is being forced to think about us. It will listen keenly to what we say. . . . I rejoice that the issue is becoming plain.[1]

When it came to responding to the points of the 1920 resolution, the Rochester Seminary faced no apparent embarrassment or difficulty. On the first point, the request for a statement of purpose, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees sent to the chairman of the investigating committee a six page document originally drafted by President Barbour and Professor Moehlman at the instruction of the faculty.[2] This document consisted in large measure of long passages quoted verbatim from recent editions of the Bulletin, like the following words of Barbour:

> The spirit of the seminary, we believe, has not altered. It is still Rochester Seminary, with much of that which has characterized it through all the years, free in thought, fearless in investigation, facing unafraid all claimants to recognition as truth, holding that its chief mission is to make good ministers of Jesus Christ, men of manly character, men of genuine faith, men with a constructive message to a sinning and sorrowing world, and able to utter this message with a prophetic fervor and directness out of a heart of love. The devotional life of the seminary is deep and strong, and students testify that their years as students are years of the deepening and strengthening of the spiritual life. We have not been shunted into an eddy while the stream of truth has flowed on. We have been aware of the great movements in constructive Christian thought, and have adjusted ourselves to them so far as we have believed them sound and warranted, and we believe that our graduates go out with a message which can stand the test of the plumb line of the Master of truth and life.[3]

This way of quoting the Bulletin in response to questions about the purpose of the seminary was not simply a handy way of answering, but was also a means of telling critics that the school had nothing to hide and that it had regularly kept its friends and followers posted on its intentions.

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[1]Letter of Cross to Barbour, July 17, 1920.

[2]Faculty Minutes, November 24, 1920.

[3]Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, December 13, 1920.

The above statement was taken from Barbour's official report to trustees for 1916, and to this and the other quotations was attached a list of about a dozen additional references in the Bulletin to which the investigating committee might look for "a continuous story of Rochester's ideals, spirit and life." The Executive Committee also responded to the third point of the resolution, the question about control of the institution, by submitting with a minimum of comment the pertinent sections of the constitution and by-laws of the New York Baptist Union for Ministerial Education.[1]

Subsequent to receiving the above information, the chairman of the denomination's investigating committee, the Rev. Frank M. Goodchild of New York City, requested additional data on the basis of which his committee could make its own report. He learned, among other things in the reply of the Executive Committee, that the trustees were required to be "members of Baptist churches in good standing," while there was no such stipulation with regard to the faculty. And in response to his query whether the faculty were required to teach or did in fact teach certain "essential principles of the Christian faith"--that is, "the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible, the sinlessness of Jesus, the deity of Jesus Christ, the necessity and sufficiency of the atonement, the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the return of our Lord"--he was told that while it was indeed not mandatory, in fact "the principles referred to are taught in our seminary." The seminary's communication hastened to add, however, that "we recognize that the interpretation of all these principles has

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[1] Ibid.

varied among Baptists from generation to generation, and differs very widely among Baptists of the present day." Goodchild and his committee further were told that the seminary faculty was expected to be faithful "to the spirit and the heritage of the Baptists," and that the seminary had "never imposed a credal test" and was "not likely to do so." The document ended with a brief review of the formal and informal religious exercises available to the students and faculty.[1] With that the investigation of Rochester was completed and those concerned abut the outcome had only to wait for the committee's report at the 1921 meeting of the Northern Baptist Convention at Des Moines.

Meanwhile, however, the attack upon the schools continued. Fundamentalist spokesman J. C. Massee sought to clarify the issues by setting forth three great dangers:

> First, the present conduct of our schools is undemocratic and anti-Baptistic. They are governed almost without exception by self-perpetuating boards of trustees not subject either to direct or indirect selection by either the Northern Baptist Convention or the state Baptist conventions. . . . The second danger menacing us on every hand is the absence of any authoritative uniform statement of belief to which the teachers in our schools must subscribe. . . . Third, the problem of the schools also embraces the danger arising from the so-called scientific attitude to the Bible.

In connection with this third danger he brought in the New World Movement, which was just getting under way. He was convinced that this movement, with its projected allotments for education, was part of a conspiracy "to discredit the Bible in the schools; to eliminate the Bible from the schools; and to destroy the Bible through the schools."[2] This sort of frontal assault became standard strategy for the fundamentalists.

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[1] Ibid., March 21, 1921.

[2] "The Churches and the Schools," Watchman Examiner (March 17, 1921), 336-38.

At Rochester a more subtle and indirect tactic was preferred[1]--namely, the display of the work of the school through its own public organ, the Bulletin. The edition for May, 1921, issued just weeks prior to the meeting of the Northern Baptist Convention, contained a number of articles calculated to win favor for the school. There were bibliographies for pastors, a comprehensive list of the parables of Jesus, two chapel sermons (by Barbour and Stewart), articles on the religious life at the school and on the seminary and the Rochester churches, a graphic presentation of certain statistics from the school's history, and the like. But perhaps most compelling were the "seminary reminiscences" (anonymously written by Moehlman) with long quotations from A. H. Strong, and the thirty-seven pages of messages of appreciation and support "from our younger alumni," including a good number of Strong's last students. Barbour made quite a point of calling this issue of the Bulletin to the attention of the trustees at their annual meeting, and he especially urged them to read the messages from the younger alumni. "No member of the Board can afford not to do so," he told them.[2]

So, as the time for the Des Moines convention drew near, the seminary had in its own way stated its case. But Barbour and the faculty now had another worry on their hands--a student by the name of Russell M. Brougher. Both Professors Cross and Parsons claimed to have found young Brougher guilty of plagiarism in their courses, and in each case when confronted with the evidence he became angered and refused to apologize.

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[1]President Charles E. Goodell of Franklin College, Indiana, in an address given at the seminary May 23, 1921, met Massee's attack head-on. Cf. RTS Bulletin (June, 1921), 52-59.

[2]RTS Bulletin (June, 1921), 38.

Cross thought he should be expelled "until it has become perfectly clear that he has reformed."[1] Ordinarily, such a student would have been dismissed immediately, but, as Barbour put it, "the matter has some complications which make it a particularly difficult one."[2] The first complication was that Russell was the son of Rochester alumnus J. Whitcomb Brougher (class of 1894), influential Los Angeles pastor who was already giving his support to the fundamentalists and who happened also by change to be a member of the committee investigating the schools. Another complication was that young Brougher apparently never told his father the full story behind his difficulties at the seminary, but instead tried to turn his disadvantage into advantage--all in the name of orthodoxy. The picture he gave his father was that the liberal professors at Rochester were harassing him because of his orthodox belief. Moreover, he told this also to others, including that omnipresent self-styled fundamentalist crusader, William Bell Riley of Minneapolis. Riley was in Rochester in May of 1921, and according to one account, Russell Brougher

> volunteered information about the teaching of the institution which he knew would be used by Dr. Riley to discredit the seminary. . . . Mr. Brougher has also given the impression to some of the students . . . that one of his purposes in remaining in this institution, with whose teaching he is not in sympathy, was to gather information which could be used by him later on in supporting the cause of the opponents of the seminary.[3]

Very soon President Barbour received a letter that must have confirmed his worst fears about the matter. The "outraged" elder Brougher wrote to say that "an unjust, cruel attack" was permitted upon Russell

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[1]Letter of Cross to Barbour, May 28, 1921; cf. letter of Parsons to Barbour, May 28, 1921.

[2]Letter of Barbour to Cross, June 16, 1921.

[3]Letter of Justin Wroe Nixon to Barbour, May 26, 1921.

because he had exposed the theological views of some of the professors.

> The whole business is that Cross, and Parsons, and Moehlman are afraid to have it known what they really believe. I challenge them to print, in any Baptist paper, a statement of the things they actually believe about the Bible, the Miracles, the Deity of Christ, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the Second Coming of Christ. They are afraid to have the denomination know exactly what they believe. They are suspicious of every student who does not agree with them. And now in view of the fact that I am a member of this investigating committee they are contemptible enough to vent their spite upon Russell instead upon me.

Brougher continued by saying that W. B. Riley did not have a written statement from Russell, so would most likely say nothing, and that Russell himself

> probably will continue to keep his mouth shut, but I will not. You and the faculty of Rochester in your unwarranted attack have released me from all further restraint.
>
> Unless some satisfactory explanation and apology is made to Russell for the outrageous treatment given him, I shall proceed at the opportune time to make public the whole affair. I will tell the entire Baptist denomination the methods used by your faculty for intimidating and bulldozing students so that they would not dare to tell the things taught them even if they wanted to. . . . Unless something is done immediately to straighten this matter out with Russell, I shall give the seminary something worth talking about.
>
> I hardly need to repeat, that I feel thoroughly outraged by this whole matter, and am righteously indignant from the center out.[1]

So the lines were drawn. The faculty had caught a student cheating, and now they were damned for it--damned if they expelled him, damned if they didn't. It may be, too, that J. Whitcomb Brougher, ordinarily a jovial and personable soul, was also damned--driven further into fundamentalism by his own son's folly. And as for the son--he sold his soul for a mess of pottage, for he did indeed have greater possibilities. But Barbour had to answer his mail. He wrote in a non-compromising but conciliatory manner, assuring the elder Brougher that there had been no

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[1]Letter of J. W. Brougher to Barbour, June 6, 1921.

intimidation of his son, urging patience, and reminding his friend of long standing that "we are living over a magazine . . . and these are bad days in which to carry lighted matches."[1] Brougher responded immediately by reiterating his earlier charges, this time adding that Russell's character had been marred by accusations that he was a "spy" for W. B. Riley and that he was "disloyal and a traitor." A written apology from the faculty was demanded.[2] Of course, no apology was ever made. In fact, there is no evidence that Barbour ever responded to this letter. He received it on the eve of the Des Moines convention and probably decided there could be nothing gained by further exchange at the time.

At Des Moines the investigating committee presented its report, expressing general confidence in the work of the schools, while at the same time indicating that

> here and there doubtless is a teacher who has departed from the Baptist faith or has lost the Savior's spirit. The utterances of these men have been published far and wide, and have brought strife into our ranks and confusion to our work. It is the duty of the Baptist communities throughout the country to displace from the schools men who impugn the authority of the Scriptures as the Word of God and who deny the deity of our Lord. . . .[3]

A minority report expressing confidence in <u>all</u> Baptist teachers was also presented, and the convention forestalled further debate by accepting both documents. But even the majority report was at the time generally regarded as on the whole surprisingly favorable to the schools, especially in the light of the situation that gave rise to the investigation.[4] Even when the denomination had spoken a bit harshly, it had spoken without teeth.

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[1]Letter of Barbour to J. W.Brougher, June 15, 1921.

[2]Letter of J. W. Brougher to Barbour, June 18, 1921.

[3]<u>Annual of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1921</u>, p. 93; cf. pp. 49-98.

[4]Cf. the comments of Helen Barrett Montgomery, <u>Watchman Examiner</u> (September 22, 1921), 1201, and (November 3, 1921), 1400.

The convention over and the investigation completed, without achieving anything tangible for the critics of the schools, J. Whitcomb Brougher was ready to renew his correspondence with Barbour. First off, he indicated that the struggle over the schools was far from over, that "a long fight" was ahead, and that because it was "generally conceded now that Rochester is absolutely as radical as Chicago" he thought it "the wise thing for Russell to go to Louisville [the Southern Baptist Seminary] next year."[1] This time Barbour wrote to Russell himself, though he made a copy of the letter for his father. "I am wondering," Barbour wrote,

> whether you told your father all the facts regarding your life and work at the seminary. If you have, I think he would feel rather differently regarding the attitude of the faculty toward you. . . .
>
> I am writing you with all of my experience of the past year in mind. It has been a hard year. . . . It has not been a year of defeat for the schools, and I have absolutely no question as to the outcome. I think that I sympathize fully with you in the difficulties through which you have passed. It was not an easy year for you. But as I review my own relations with you I cannot find anything with which to reproach myself. I certainly have consistently and steadily tried to be your friend, in the wisest way that I knew, and my attitude in that respect has certainly not changed. . . .
>
> I hope that you have read the report of the Committee on Denominational Schools presented at Des Moines and have seen how manifestly Dr. Riley and his friends failed to carry out their program of wrecking our denominational educational work. The schools are going on with a new confidence in them on the part of a very great majority of our Baptist people, and we in Rochester are humbly and persistently going on with our work, trying to keep as near to the spirit and teaching of Christ as we can.[2]

Barbour sent a copy of this letter to the elder Brougher, to whom he also wrote, saying in part:

> I think [Russell] has made a mistake in not being willing to give more careful and painstaking consideration to some of the things which have been presented in the classroom. No one

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[1]Letter of J. W. Brougher to Barbour, July 2, 1921.

[2]Letter of Barbour to Russell M. Brougher, July 12, 1921.

> wishes to force any conclusions upon him, but a student will do well to face honestly and genuinely things which he is sure to meet sooner or later and which cannot be met by a simple statement of rejection. The world of thought has altered in the theological realm as in every other realm since you and I were students in the seminary, and it is idle to try to persuade ourselves that this is not so.[1]

Regarding Russell's proposed transfer to the Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville, Barbour again faced a dilemma--of wanting to be rid of a student who deserved to be dismissed and knowing that his leaving would probably mean additional trouble for the seminary. After Russell had requested that his records be forwarded to Louisville Barbour wrote him again:

> Naturally, in view of the prominence of your father and the fact that he himself is an alumnus of Rochester, the enemies of our schools will try to make whatever they can from the fact of your transfer. This is a contigency which no doubt you have taken into full consideration. I am sure that in the long course of the years you will realize that you have made a mistake, and that what might have been a mere incident has been magnified into an importance which it does not deserve.[2]

Interestingly enough, for whatever reason, young Brougher did not complete the transfer but remained at Rochester another year. According to the official records, however, he did not graduate. Apparently most of those aware that anything had transpired between Russell Brougher and the seminary preferred to drop the whole matter, though a few years later he did make the footnote of a fundamentalist broadside.[3] Otherwise, this needless tempest in a teapot subsided.[4]

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[1]Letter of Barbour to J. W. Brougher, July 14, 1921.

[2]Letter of Barbour to Russell M. Brougher, July 23, 1921.

[3]Gordon, The Leaven of the Sadducees, p. 189.

[4]Just one year later than the Brougher incident the seminary faced another potentially very embarrassing situation, this time regarding a faculty member, John Richard Brown, who had been professor of Old Testament

The saddest day at Rochester in the summer of 1921 must surely have been the day in July when the Watchman Examiner arrived bearing the latest from the pen of A. H. Strong. Now, the old gentleman, with certain qualifications regarding evolution and higher criticism, was setting himself

> squarely on the side of those who demand that our Baptist institutions should be true to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and that none who is unable or unwilling to confess that faith should have place in the government or in the instruction in those institutions. . . .
>
> I see . . . in the present [fundamentalist] uprising of our denomination, in spite of its incidental disclosures of narrowness and short-sightedness, a movement of the Spirit of Christ, and a call to return to the old paths in which we have prospered. . . . Let us purge our institutions of men who are unwilling to confess their faith. Let us send out to our missions only those who have a definite gospel to proclaim. And let us inaugurate this change by the adoption of a 'Confession of Faith' that shall make it plain that we are not only Christians but Baptists.[1]

Thus, in the last year of his life, Strong not only played a tune for the fundamentalists, he wrote the score and commissioned them to perform it. It was a sour note to finish on. Four months later he was dead.

The adoption of a confession of faith is what Strong had called for and that is what the fundamentalists set about to achieve. This became the key issue looking toward the 1922 convention at Indianapolis. When the Rochester trustees met in the spring of the year Barbour spoke to them at some length about the matter. He reminded them of the traditional Baptist belief

> in the complete competency of the individual soul . . . [and] the historic Baptist position . . . that no man or organization has or

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since 1919. It was learned in June, 1922, that Brown had actually never received the Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees which he claimed. He resigned June 9, 1922. Thus, if at Rochester there perhaps was a dishonest fundamentalist student, there was also a dishonest liberal professor. This never became general knowledge.

[1]Strong, "Confessions of Our Faith," Watchman Examiner (July 21, 1921), 910.

> can have the right to impose upon the believer the acceptance of any credal interpretation of the gospel. . . . While recognizing the value of formulated statements of doctrine and belief as tending to help in clarifying the thinking of many and in giving exposition of the great truths which we hold in common with, or in distinction from, other bodies of believers, I can see that there may be grave peril that such a credal statement or confession of faith as might be adopted by such a body as the Northern Baptist Convention might be appealed to as authoritative, and might be used as a test by which to determine the standing of any individual believer or group of believers, or of any institution such as a church or school. If such use of a statement of belief were made, it would be absolutely in contradiction to our historic Baptist polity and practice.[1]

The same issue of the Bulletin which carried these words of Barbour also reprinted from the Journal of Religion an article on the history of creeds and credalism by Moehlman, in which it was shown that "the adoption of summaries of faith has been preceded by, accompanied by, and followed by tragic controversy."[2]

When in a short while the Baptists gathered in Indianapolis, W. B. Riley did indeed move that the Northern Baptist Convention pledge itself to the New Hampshire Confession of Faith. It was then that Cornelius Woelfkin rose to the occasion with his substitute proposal "that the New Testament is the all-sufficient ground of faith and practice, and we need no other statement."[3] The overwhelming passage of Woelfkin's motion was a defeat from which the fundamentalists never really recovered. They had failed in two of their main objectives--the purging of the schools and the imposition of a standard for orthodoxy. The fundamentalist controversy was by no means ended with the 1922 convention; in some respects it

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[1] RTS Bulletin (June, 1922), 40-41.

[2] "What Are the Fundamentals of Christianity?," RTS Bulletin (June, 1922), 108. Cf. Journal of Religion, II (January, 1922), 16-26.

[3] Annual of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1922, p. 133.

was just beginning, and the years following were to see much additional strife, particularly over the conduct of missions abroad and the practice of baptism at home. And the fundamentalists were by no means through with the schools, as their persistent sniping across the years indicated. President Barbour and others at Rochester continued to be very much involved in the affairs of the denomination, but from 1923 on Barbour's annual reports to the trustees do not deal with the denomination's struggles. Quite obviously the pressure was off the seminary. By 1925, when the convention met at Seattle, the united front of the fundamentalists had given way, and they dissipated their strength check-mating one another. Things were well enough in hand for Barbour to set sail for a six month's leave of absence in Europe. And just about this time J. Whitcomb Brougher, Barbour's sometime correspondent, hit the road on an extensive speaking tour "in which he delivered the address 'Play Ball,' an effective plea for peace" within the denomination.[1] For all practical purposes, then, so far as the schools were concerned, the controversy was over, which is not to suggest, of course, that attacks on the schools came to an end.[2]

What the fundamentalists and others learned was that schools like the Rochester Seminary were, as one who was there put it, "very much a law unto ourselves, not dependent on churches for financial support, nor subject in any way to their discipline. If some were critical, they could do nothing about it."[3] The schools were like Pinocchio: "I've got no

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[1]Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, p. 117.

[2]Ernest Gordon's The Leaven of the Sadducees (1926) was probably the most comprehensive collection of vitriolic material published in one volume during the whole fundamentalist struggle, but Gordon fed upon rather than fed the controversy. Cf. his chapter on "The Apostate Seminaries," especially the discussion of Rochester, pp. 187-95.

[3]Interview with Glenn B. Ewell, February 26, 1964.

strings! There are no strings on me!" Whether theological seminaries committed to training the church's ministry should be independent of the church to that extent is a valid and important theological question. It is finally a question about the nature of the ministry and the nature of the church. Quite obviously, the question was not really faced in the fundamentalist controversy. In fact, it was not even raised--at least not properly so. The fundamentalists were interested in the same thing the liberals or modernists were interested in--control of the machinery of the denomination for their own purposes. The fundamentalists went through all the motions of conjuring up an authoritative ecclesiastical structure to do their work for them, but in a loosely organized body like the Northern Baptist Convention they had too little to begin with and too much against them to achieve such a goal. And even if there was anything at all legitimate in their protest, they were hardly going about the task in the right manner or in a way calculated to have any long-term effect. They would have solved the problem by bringing "offenders" to trial, but there was no ecclesiastical machinery for such. They seemed unwilling or unable to do the painstaking theological work necessary to win their point. The fact is that the controversy was not, as staged, a theological controversy. It was a political struggle within the denomination, in which opinion gathered into opposing parties between which almost all fruitful interchange, not to mention creative theological dialogue, ceased. As the conflict became acute, those occupying middle-ground--like A. H. Strong--tended, as Professor Handy has pointed out, to come down "in support of one or the other extreme; Protestantism seemed bifurcated into fundamentalism and modernism. In the heat of battle the extremists had their opportunity."[1] What all this

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[1]Robert T. Handy, "Fundamentalism and Modernism in Perspective," Religion in Life, XXIV (Summer, 1955), 392.

meant for the Northern Baptist Convention was that "instead of creative tensions, the denomination had only tensions, and a schizophrenia developed for which no treatment was sought."[1]

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that during the fundamentalist controversy the Northern Baptist Convention did choose, on the basis provided, in favor or its schools. It was a defeat for anti-intellectualism and, at least to that extent, a victory for academic freedom, but one, despite the independence of the schools, not achieved wholly without church support. It seems to me a grave fallacy to suppose that the churches did not support the schools or did not support liberal theology. Surely the fundamentalists were not the sole spokesmen for the people in the churches. At Rochester the seminary trustees--all Baptist churchmen, many ministers--steadily supported the school. In 1925, after years of criticism of the schools, the trustees demonstrated their own confidence in the Rochester faculty by striking from the by-laws a phrase making it "the duty of the Committee on Instruction to visit from time to time the class rooms of the several professors."[2] What was true of the trustees was also true of the alumni. Moehlman reported that "in the dark hours . . . when the fundamentalist attack upon the school was at its height they never wavered in their loyalty to Alma Mater."[3] Of course they were Rochester men, but they also were pastors of churches, missionaries, denominational executives, and the like--in short, churchmen. As for the churches themselves, those in

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[1]Maring, "Baptists and Changing Views of the Bible," Foundations, I (October, 1958), 57.

[2]Minutes of the Board of Trustees, May 12, 1925. Cf. also the statement on "The Future of the Seminary," co-authored by President Barbour and A. W. Beaven, then president of the Board of Trustees, RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 75-81.

[3]"Morituru Salute," p. 12.

Rochester always stood by the seminary. In fact, the school's influence on local churches of all denominations was such that fundamentalism was almost non-existent in the city through the 1920's and no church experienced the bitter controversies prevalent in other locales. There was in the city a non-denominational "Gospel Center" which was the sole proclaimer of an "avowedly fundamentalist message."[1] Many of the other churches were decidedly liberal. Rochester Seminary was supported by its local constituency, by those churches close enough to know it best. How far beyond the city of Rochester that base of support extended it is not possible to say, though one other fact seems to tell in favor of Rochester, as well as its sister seminary, Colgate. The Baptists of the surrounding area--chiefly New York State--did not during the heat of controversy, like some of their brethren in other places, raise up some new "fundamental" or "orthodox" school to counteract the established and now liberal institutions.[2]

What I am suggesting is that, given the circumstances of Baptist polity and the religious climate in America at the time, the Rochester Seminary probably stayed remarkably close to some of the churches. Obviously, it was not close to them all, partly because many churches did not see fit to follow the sort of leadership Rochester was providing. There were other churches, however, that did follow, which indicates that, if the seminary was liberal, so were many of the churches.[3] The seminary was

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[1]Price, "One-Hundred Years of Protestantism in Rochester," Rochester Historical Society, XII (1933), 374.

[2]The Northern Baptist Theological Seminary was founded in 1913 to counteract the University of Chicago; at Philadelphia, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary was established in 1925 to offset Crozer; at Boston, Gordon Divinity School, founded in 1945, provided a counterbalance to Newton.

[3]Cf. E. D. Burton, "Recent Trends in the Northern Baptist Churches," American Journal of Theology, XXIV (July, 1920), 321-38.

close to some of the churches not in being subject to them but in being in sympathy with them, bound to them not out of necessity but, as suggested above, out of faith and loyalty. In 1927, when the fundamentalist controversy was on the wane, President Barbour wrote in the Watchman Examiner in behalf of the schools;

> As far as I know these schools . . . , there is not one of them in which trustees and faculty are not eagerly desiring, and planning, and praying that all students shall come from these schools with a faith and a message distinctively Christian and evangelical; a message that shall ever help toward the coming of the kingdom of God and the winning of men and women and children to genuine Christian life and service. If this were not so, I would be likely to know it. He would be foolish indeed who would not admit the possibility of a mistake in the teaching or administrative personnel of any school, but . . . the heart of our schools is sound and is true to him to whom alone we are primarily responsible, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.[1]

Barbour knew the time and the place for the above remark. As to the authenticity of the statement, there is abundant evidence in its favor. To agree with Barbour and to say, as I would insist upon doing, that the personnel of schools like the Rochester Seminary were faithful and true to Christ in their own way is not, however, to suggest that there was no modernist heresy about which there ought to have been genuine and proper concern at the time. There was such a heresy, and at Rochester the same door out of which A. H. Strong was ideologically tossed was the door through which modernism entered.

VI

The administration of President Barbour was the time when the tides of controversy came in, but the Rochester Seminary was not overwhelmed

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[1]"The Christian School," Watchman Examiner (June 30, 1927), 815.

in the flood. Of course the school rested on a foundation of economic independence, but that fact alone does not mean that it was not tested in the storm. Yet in those difficult days it was President Barbour himself who bore the full force of the tumult. He did not allow his faculty to be exposed without always and also being at their sides. He answered the critics of the school, but always temperately and respectfully rather than bitterly or defensively. It may be that what finally undid the fundamentalist protest was the obvious Christianity of liberals like Barbour.

The last years of Barbour's presidency were occupied largely with proceedings leading to the merger of the Rochester and Colgate Seminaries. After numerous informal discussions on Baptist theological education in the northeastern states, a group from Colgate, Newton, and Rochester met in New York City on February 26, 1926. Out of this conference came agreement on the desirability that Newton remain at Boston and that Colgate and Rochester consider unification of their work. From that time, the proceedings toward consolidation moved steadily toward culmination. It was necessary to obtain not only enabling action from the state legislature but also a State Supreme Court ruling invalidating the 1850 injunction locating the Colgate Seminary at Hamilton "perpetually."[1] Barbour became and remained for one year president of the Colgate Rochester Divinity School before he resigned to accept the presidency of Brown University. Barbour had said of the Rochester Seminary in 1925:

> We cannot put back the hands of the clock. For good or for ill we are committed to this twentieth century. We have to live under its conditions and to speak in its tongue. No return to the dogmatisms of a dead past will avail with us.[2]

This would be the spirit, too, of the new institution.

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[1]Cf. Barbour, "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," CRDS Bulletin, I (October, 1928), 8-31. This is an account of the history of the two schools and background to the merger.

[2]RTS Bulletin (June, 1925), 290.

CONCLUSION

The rise of American religious liberalism occurred during the period between the Civil War and the Great Depression of 1929 and following. We have examined what happened at the Rochester Theological Seminary from 1872, when A. H. Strong became president and professor of systematic theology, to 1928, when the Rochester institution merged with the Colgate Seminary to form the Colgate Rochester Divinity School. The key figure in the study has been President Strong. When he came to the school patterns of free inquiry and academic excellence had already been established, largely through the effort of his teacher, Ezekiel Gilman Robinson. Also, the main lines for the school's relation to the churches were already drawn. Legally, the school was independent of the churches from the first; economically, it was dependent upon them, committed to travel the road to the churches. But, at the same time, it was also committed to travel the road to independent endowment.

During his forty year term of office A. H. Strong labored alongside three successive faculties--the original group that welcomed him to the school, the Big Five, and the liberal generation. And there were three distinct phases in Strong's theology which were not unrelated to the three faculties with which he worked. Taken as a whole, Strong's thought was complex and inclusive, offering something for everyone. If in his last days he identified with and encouraged the fundamentalists, he could still also be quoted in support of the free inquiry under which liberalism flourished.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries American Protestantism faced the threefold challenge of the scientific age--the scientific method, evolutionary thought, and the new urban, industrial situation. At Rochester the challenge was not ignored but was faced frankly and honestly. The transition to religious liberalism which was already underway at the seminary during Strong's adminstration was in effect completed during the three year acting-presidency of J. W. A. Stewart. And at just the time that liberalism came to prevail there was also achieved at the school a grand measure of economic independence which made possible a well-nigh unlimited freedom for the expression of new ideas. This freedom was both fully used and thoroughly tested during C. A. Barbour's term of office.

In 1924 Robert L. Kelly, student of theological education in America, reported:

> There is an increasing number of seminaries which are formally committed to the scientific procedure, whose teachers know and speak the language of science, use its methods in the classroom and the laboratory, and undertake to interpret the life of the individual, the community, and the world in terms of principles in harmony with scientific theories and discoveries. Rare seminaries are beginning to appreciate the relation of the churches to the expanding social problem.[1]

The Rochester Theological Seminary was just such a school as Kelly described. In 1925 J. W. A. Stewart summarized the matter so far as Rochester was concerned:

> The modern scientific movement and spirit, the theory of evolution, modern philosophical thought, biblical criticism, the social movement--were already extending their influences in Dr. Strong's time. . . . These influences have reached their full tide in this later period.[2]

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[1]Kelly, "Tendencies in Theological Education," Journal of Religion, IV (January, 1924), 30.

[2]Stewart, "More Recent Days," RTS Bulletin (May, 1925), 48.

It was said above that there was such a thing as a modernist heresy and that at Rochester this heresy entered in by the same door out of which A. H. Strong was ideologically tossed. Wherever else he sometimes stood, Strong stood mainly in the line of traditional catholic Christianity in all its richness and breadth. But in our period that mainstream Christianity came to be displaced at Rochester by modern assurances, and historic Christianity came to be looked upon not as the judge of or norm for the present but as something outmoded and therefore to be overcome. Modernism, so far as it rejected traditional catholic Christianity, was heretical, and the same must be said of fundamentalism. Both were extreme and therefore heretical movements. Unfortunately, in American Protestantism generally during our period there was a bifurcation between these extremes so that, as Andrew K. Rule has pointed out, "by powerful implication the possibility of an irenic, scholarly, broad-minded Protestantism that was in harmony with historic Christian thought was denied."[1] In other words, ours was a period in which it was exceedingly difficult, perhaps well-nigh impossible, to remain orthodox. Orthodox theology was very generally surrendered for one or another extreme position.

Orthodoxy, it seems to me, is the meeting-point of a proper conservatism and a truly experimental faith; it is the point where the holding on to what the church has received intersects the making use of what has been received. That which the church has received is central, for it is nothing other than the Christian faith, biblical and evangelic, which has its focal point in Jesus Christ and which makes its way to the contemporary church by means of the tradition of the centuries. What the church

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[1]Rule, "Liberalism," in The Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. L. A. Loetscher (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1955), II, p. 663.

has thus received must be held fast, but a mere holding operation, especially if practiced exclusively, will harden into a fundamentalism, and when this happens true conservatism as well as the point of the gospel itself tends to be denied, for the gospel cannot by its very nature finally be restricted or bound or contained. The attempt to protect the gospel by confinement is the surest way to lose the gospel, however sincerely the operation may be executed. The other extreme is the experimental one. What the church has received must be used, but the quest for use and usefulness when made the sole or exclusive concern of the church ends in modernism, that is, in the subjecting of the received gospel to modern criteria in such a way as effectively to empty of its normative content and therefore to eliminate the gospel. A single-minded preoccupation with relevance leads directly to a wholly relativized and therefore non-existent gospel. Orthodoxy, then, is neither a holding operation nor a quest for contemporary relevance, but it is both. Orthodoxy is the conjunction of a genuine conservatism with a properly experimental faith. But the period under study was a time when it was exceedingly difficult to remain orthodox.

When President Strong retired in 1912, his attempts at enshrining his own thought at Rochester having failed, he nevertheless made the claim that "this seminary will be preserved from essential error."[1] Whatever exactly that he meant by those words, it seems to me that the history of the school is really a vindication of what he said. This is to suggest that the Christian church is served not only by its orthodoxies but also by its heresies. It also is to confess a confident hope that good finally providentially emerges from the vicissitudes of historical circumstance. In the dialectic of history it falls to some ages to be what the Puritans

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[1] The Record (May, 1912), 22.

called "melting times and thereby discovering times." In other words, some periods are given over almost wholly to problem salving on a large scale. The period which saw the rise of American religious liberalism was such an age, and it seems to me that perhaps the present study indicates that the key problem theologically in our period was the problem of authority--whether the authority of the Bible, of the church, of Jesus Christ, of experience. The variety of solutions proposed to this problem at Rochester were representative of theological thought in America at the time. In this respect, as in others, what happened at Rochester was typical of that American religious liberalism of which this has been a case study.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

CONSTITUTION OF THE NEW YORK BAPTIST UNION FOR MINISTERIAL EDUCATION[1]

ARTICLE I. This Society shall be called "The New York Baptist Union for Ministerial Education."

ARTICLE II. Its object shall be, to furnish means of instruction to such young men of the Baptist denomination as shall give satisfactory evidence to the churches of which they are members, and to the Trustees of the Society, of their personal piety, and their call to the gospel ministry.

ARTICLE III. The Union shall consist of members of Baptist churches, paying at least two dollars yearly; and of members of Baptist churches and congregations, made Life-members of the Union by the payment of twenty dollars at one time, [or Honorary members of the Board by the payment of fifty dollars]; and of delegates sent by Baptist churches regularly contributing to the Union, no church sending more than one such delegate.

ARTICLE IV. The officers of the Society shall be a President, Vice-President, and a Recording Secretary, to be chosen annually by ballot; there shall also be a Board for the transaction of business, consisting of thirty-three Trustees, [thirteen constituting a quorum for the transaction of business], each of whom shall be elected by ballot, for a term of three years. The Board shall be divided into three classes, one of which shall be chosen at each annual meeting. This Board shall forever be composed of members of Baptist churches in good standing.

ARTICLE V. The Board shall take charge of the pecuniary affairs of the Society, appoint the necessary agents, receive applications of candidates, judge of their qualifications, and make appropriations to such as are received as beneficiaries of the funds of the Society, [fill all vacancies in their own body until the next meeting of the Union], and generally

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[1]The text of the Constitution is here given as it appeared in the Annual Report of the Union, 1868. Between 1850 and 1868 four changes were made in the original constitution: The Board of Trustees was enlarged from twenty-four members to thirty-three (Art. IV), and Articles III, IV, and V were expanded by the addition of a statement to each (bracketed in the text). No substantial changes were made in the constitution after 1868.

watch over the interests and transact the business of the Society. They shall keep a fair record of their proceedings, and make annually a full and detailed report of the same to the Society.

ARTICLE VI. The Society shall sustain a Theological School, with a suitable number of Professors, to be chosen by the Board of Trustees, and removed at their pleasure; but no Professor shall be appointed or removed except by a vote of a majority of the whole Board.

ARTICLE VII. At each annual meeting, the Society shall make provision for determining the time and place of holding the next meeting. The Board of Trustees shall have power to call extra meetings of the Society. Three weeks notice shall be given in one or more Baptist newspapers, published in this State, of the time and place of holding such meetings, and also of the objects for which it is called; and no other business shall be transacted thereat.

ARTICLE VIII. In case of local or important questions, including the election of Trustees, the decision shall be had by votes of churches, and in such case, one annual or life-member, or delegate, shall speak for the churches respectively, the members and delegate of the church choosing such single member or delegate to speak for them. Any three members of the Union may ask that a question be treated as thus local or important in character, and the preliminary vote whether such be its character, shall also be decided by votes of churches.

APPENDIX II

C. A. BARBOUR'S INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS, SPRING, 1915 (EXCERPTS FROM BARBOUR'S NOTES)[1]

Interviews with members of the Class of 1915:

Feels a lack of passion. Is the change in theological emphasis responsible?

Accepted traditional beliefs in college. Was "up in the air" his middle year, but much more settled now.

Is a very orthodox man. Wants to go back to Chicago to the Moody School to get his bearings. Feels that the teaching here is prevailingly philosophical and speculative, perhaps even evasive and indefinite.

Came here without fixed convictions, and the work has been very constructive for him. He is "obsessed with the personality of Christ." He also says that the "newer point of view has been his salvation."

Came here with a traditional faith; now has what he believes is a rational one.

He has found a real message here. He feels that the theology of Dr. Cross "is a necessary reconstruction."

Had an intellectual battle . . . , in fact was almost an atheist. "Has gradually gained here." The emphasis upon the social application of the gospel has greatly helped.

His faith has been largely transformed since he came. He arrived here with the traditional belief. Was unsettled during his middle year. The three years as a whole have been constructive.

Says that he has much stronger faith than he formerly had. There have been times during his course when he has been a bit at sea.

Considered Moody School, but is very glad he came here. Many things have surprised, but not startled him.

Came with convictions, but rather traditional. Sometimes has been unsettled, but now is well settled.

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[1]The full notes, with names, are in the CRDS archives.

Says that Dr. Cross will lecture before the close of the year on his theology as an "evangel."

Raises the question as to whether there is need of more evangelistic fervor and practice in the Seminary. Lack of insistence upon the importance of conversion, and what seems to him an undue emphasis upon the side of religious education as being all-sufficient. Believes that the students rather hesitate to give evangelistic appeal.

Had much science in college. The Seminary has shown the relation of the material and the spiritual and the supremacy of the spiritual. Has a real message. What he has learned makes him desire moral and religious life as never before. Devotional life stronger. . . . He thinks that too much time is given to the fact of historical investigation; too much time spent on the background, not enough in practice and practical application.

Interviews with members of the Class of 1916:

Was raised under most orthodox influences and was not much upset during his college course (Franklin College). Has been pretty badly shaken up here and is just beginning to get something into place, but many things yet unsettled. Dr. Parsons' work in the "Life of Jesus" has disturbed him as much as anything. Dr. Cross' work is much of the same nature. The things which have disturbed him in Dr. Parsons' classes have been regarding the reliability of the NT MSS, the question of miracles, that of the virgin birth, and that of the resurrection. He is so much shaken that he is uncertain what he is going to preach.

Chapel means more than does the noon meeting to his devotional life, especially when led by Rauschenbusch, Parsons, or Cross. He marks that in spite of the teaching of the last two named, they have a very strong and manifest spiritual life, hence he believes that things are going to straighten out.

Altogether a lovable man.

His beliefs were pretty well fixed when he came, but traditional in the main. . . . Has been rather shaken up by some things which he has heard here. Has perhaps talked too much, in sermons and personally, about the "new things."

Rather an unpromising man. May perhaps do for the South after he completes his course. . . . Says that the teaching has not been acceptable. He has learned more of what he did not want to believe than of that which he does. He cannot accept much of the theology, and reckons it just about what we would consider Unitarianism. Speaks particularly of the lack of "orthodoxy" in Dr. Cross, Professor Moehlman, Professor Parsons and Dr. Robins. He considers Dr. Betteridge more nearly "orthodox." He says that Cross, Parsons, and Moehlman deny the unique and incomparable deity of Christ, and that "universal salvation" is taught. He is a good example of the fact that ordinarily we do well to discourage Southern men from coming to us. . . .

We did not realize, perhaps, what a reputation for heterodoxy Rochester was getting in the South. He does not know whether he will

be able to get a pastorate in the South without taking some work at Louisville after he completes his course here. Says that he would have gone to Louisville in the middle of his Junior year if it had not been that the scholarship aid here is so much more than it is there, and that the same reason will probably bring him back here next year, in spite of his dissatisfaction with the teaching and his fear that the reputation of Rochester will count against him in the South.

Had thought out some things before coming here. . . . Has more conviction than he used to have on fundamental things: e.g., Christ as Master and Savior, and his duty to preach.

Had the historical approach in college (Ottawa University) and has not been much shaken here. The course has been a constructive one for him. He is stronger today than when he came. The Bible is to him the "unique Word of God," and historical criticism has made it a greater book to him than before. He is careful of the devotional life.

Thinks that there is comparatively little constructive work in the Seminary course, though he is enjoying it. He believes that thus far it largely consists in taking away and that he has not yet found much to put in the place of that which has been surrendered.

Disappointed in that Rochester was recommended to him as "orthodox" and is not so. He thought of going to Chicago, because he could get exactly similar teaching there, and would be nearer to his friends.

To a certain extent he had thought through matters of belief before he came. The course for him has been constructive. He is on firm ground intellectually and spiritually. It is hard for him to see how anything in the line of investigation can be surrendered in our course.

Very brilliant. Leader of class. . . . Was looking for a school of scholarship and devotion, and has found such a school here as expected. . . . His course has been constructive.

He is not getting here anything which harms him, though he does not accept everything he hears. His mind is historical. Rauschenbusch's work particularly attracts him.

Work in theology very attractive to him. Never met more Christ-like characters than among the professors and students in Rochester. Views not well formulated when he came. Has grown wonderfully here. The world has opened up to him, and the work has been genuinely constructive.

Enjoyed the interview with him as much as with almost any man that I have had.

In college he was quite unsettled. . . . Has gained here a more complete revelation of God. Has an entirely different outlook upon the world, and a different conception of salvation. Has been brought

into more intimate relationship with Christ. Feels that he has a real message. He used to preach what he had been taught; now, what he has thought through for himself.

Faced the questions of evolution and historical criticism in college, and has not been bothered much here. . . . Is now constructing a faith which will work. Dr. Cross has been a great help to him. The personality of Christ is the center of his thinking. Dr. Cross says that the historical Jesus is absolutely essential. . . . Says that both Cross and Parsons believe and teach literal resurrection of Christ from the dead, and he states positively that this is true.

Likes the attitude here as to the presentation of truth--leaving acceptance or non-acceptance a matter of individual decision.

His views pretty well fixed when he came; some thought through, some traditional. Some beliefs were knocked "helter-skelter" but very satisfactory, making him dig his way to the real message, and a real message is emerging.

He says that Dr. Parsons teaches that the resurrection of Christ was not a corporal resurrection, but a spiritual one, and that the body of Christ remained in the tomb, but is somewhat indefinite in his understanding of Dr. Parsons' teaching. Says that Parsons is perfectly honest and that he admits that the doctrine he holds should not be proclaimed to the people. Miracles, in the main, are explained away in the classroom here, though the possibility of them is not denied.

The critical methods in the seminary have sometimes taken strong hold of him. The treatment of vital things has sometimes almost made him shudder. He has felt lately a great necessity of developing in himself a vital religion. "You cannot live on problems." Thinks his devotional life is being developed through prayer and through contact with other personalities.

Speaks of the instruction of various members of the faculty, all of whom he regards highly. Quotes Moehlman as saying: "Do not preach this; get it into you, and then give the results of it."

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